

THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

BY H. H. MEETER

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of Christ

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THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

AN EXEGETICO—DOGMATIC STUDY

BY

✓
H. H. MEETER, D. D.



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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Historical Introduction.

	Page
The teachings on the doctrine before the time of the Protestant Reformation	1—5
The View of the Reformers	5—7
The Socinian view	7—13
The opposition to the Socinians :	13—15
a. By the Reformed and Lutheran theologians.	
b. „ „ Remonstrants.	
The Remonstrant view	15—17
The moral and the mystic theories of atonement	17—18
The view of Dr. W. Milligan	18—21
The view of Bishop B. F. Wescott	21—24
The view of Dr. A. Kuyper	24—25
The Roman doctrine of the mass	26—27
The view of the Eucharist as taught by High Church men in the state church of England	27—28

CHAPTER II.

Where in the New Testament Christ's High Priesthood is Discussed.

Hebrews the only Book of the New Testament that Develops the Thought of Christ as High Priest . . .	29—31
---	-------

	Page
Why in Hebrews the Thought of the High Priesthood received Special Treatment	31—35
a. Its Coordination with the Covenant Idea.	
b. The Apologetic Aim of the Writer of Hebrews.	

CHAPTER III.

Hebrews Conception of an (Ideal) High Priest.

The Function of such a High Priest	36—41
The Qualities Necessary in One Who is to Perform that Function	41—55
a. As regards His Relation to Man.	
1. Humanity.	
2. Similarity in Covenant Standing.	
3. Similarity in Experiences of Life.	
4. Compassion.	
b. As regards His Relation to God.	
1. Divine Appointment.	
2. Divinity as a Necessary Element in an Ideal High Priest or the Contribution of Christ's Divinity to His High Priesthood.	

CHAPTER IV.

Christ, the Ideal High Priest, a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek.

The Old Testament Basis of the Melchizedek Episode in Hebrews	55—60
a. The Melchizedek Story in Genesis.	
b. The Oracle in Psalm 110.	
c. Zechariah VI 9—15.	
The Melchizedek Episode in Hebrews	60—82
a. The Apologetic and Dogmatic Purpose of the Introduction of the Melchizedek Episode into Hebrews.	

	Page
b. The Order of Melchizedek.	
c. Christ, the High Priest after that Order.	
The Theories of Dr. A. Kuyper and Bishop B. F. Wescott	82—85

CHAPTER V.

The Course of Training, Which Christ had to Undergo in order to Become Melchizedekian or Ideal High Priest, — or the τελείωσις of Christ.

The τελείωσις of Christ, Meaning of	86—88
The Learning of Sympathy	88—92
The Learning of Obedience	92—94

CHAPTER VI.

When did our Lord's High Priesthood Begin ?

The Occasion for Difference of Opinion on this Subject .	95—98
The Theory that Christ on Earth was High Priest after the Order of Aaron, in Heaven after the Order of Melchizedek	98—100
The Theory that Christ "Fulfilled" both Orders . .	100—101
The Theory that Christ was High Priest in General on Earth, in Heaven High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek	101
Dr. Milligan's Theory	101—104
The Most Plausible Solution	104—112

CHAPTER VII.

The Place Where the Heavenly High Priest Ministers.

The Old Testament Tabernacle its Pattern and Shadow	113
The Heavenly Tabernacle a Locality, Distinct from the Visible Creation	113, 114
No Veil and Holy Place in the Heavenly Tabernacle . .	115

	Page
The Ideal Significance Involved in the Statements Relating to the Heavenly Tabernacle	116, 117

CHAPTER VIII.

The Offering Which the Heavenly High Priest Brought.

The Foreshadowing of It in the Sacrificial Cultus of the Old Testament	118—120
Relative Importance of the Two Parts of Christ's Offering	120—122
The Essence of Christ's Offering	122—140
a. As Viewed in the Light of the Old Testament Type	
b. Terms used to Designate that Offering.	
1. ἐαυτόν. 2. τὸ σῶμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.	
3. τὸ ἅλμα του Χριστοῦ.	
c. Cannot be Limited to His Bodily Sufferings and Death.	
d. Nor to the Obedience Rendered in His Life and Death.	
e. The Real Essence of Christ's Offering as Taught by 10 : 1—10 and 9 : 14.	

CHAPTER IX.

The Theory of Atonement of Hebrews.

The View that the Author was a Mere Ritualist	141—144
Symbolic Theory of Sacrifice	144—146
Penal Substitution Theory	146—152
Prooftexts : 10 : 19, 20 ; 9 : 12—15 ; 9 : 28 ;	
The Terms "gracious" ; "Transgressions" etc.	

CHAPTER X.

The Results of Christ's Offering.

Destruction of Him Who had the Power of Death	153—154
---	---------

	Page
Ἰλάσκεσθαι	154—155
Καθαρίζειν.	155—161
Ἀγιάζειν	161—163
Τελείωσις	163—169

CHAPTER XI.

The Presentation of the Offering in Heaven.

Why the Atonement was not Completed on Calvary	170—173
When did Christ Present His Offering to God ?	173—174
Was the Presentation Momentary, Repeated, or Continuous ?	174—178
The View given by the Book of Revelation	178—180

CHAPTER XII.

The Intercession of the Heavenly High Priest.

Its Relation to the Old Testament Type	181—182
The Activity Indicated by the ἑντυγχάνειν	182—184
The Scope of the Intercession	184—186
Relation of the Intercession to the Offering	186—192
Importance of the Intercession	192—193
The Beneficiaries of this Intercession	193—194
When did this Intercession Begin ?	194—196
When will it End ?	196—197

CHAPTER XIII.

The Benediction of the Heavenly High Priest.

Its Prefiguration in the Old Testament	198—199
Relation of the Benediction of Christ to His Kingship	199—200
The Blessings contained in the High Priestly Benediction	
The Gift of the Holy Spirit	200—202
Duration of the Benediction	202—203

CHAPTER XIV.

The Teaching of Hebrews and Various Views on the High Priesthood of Christ.

The Reformed Doctrine of Christ's High Priesthood	204—209
a. Its Substantial Agreement with Hebrews.	
b. Difference of Emphasis.	
One's View on the Offering of Christ Controlled by the View of the Nature of God	209—210
The Bearing of the Teaching of Hebrews on the Roman Doctrine of the Mass	210
The Bearing of the Teaching of Hebrews on the Doctrine of the Eucharist by High Church Men in the Church of England	211

CHAPTER XV.

The Process of Redemption as Represented by Hebrews.

God's Promises at Creation	212—213
a. Man destined to be Priest.	
b. Man destined to be King.	
The Influence of Sin	213—214
The Renewal of the Promises of Creation in the Cove- nant of Grace	214—215
The Promises of the Covenant of Grace Realized through Christ, the New Testament High Priest	215—219
a. The Relation of Christ's High Priesthood to His Divine Sonship.	
b. The Realization of the Covenant Promises through the fulfillment of the Covenant Con- ditions.	
1. Perfect Obedience.	
2. Perfect Sacrifice.	

	Page
c. By Fulfilling the Covenant Conditions Christ Es- tablished His Claim to the Covenant Blessings, and was Called i. e. Recognized by God as a Perfect or Melchizedek High Priest.	
The Application of the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace by the High Priestly Activity in Heaven . .	219
Redemption and Eternity	219—220

I.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

My purpose in this dissertation is to give an exegetico-dogmatical exposition of the high priesthood of Christ. An object of special concern it will be, to seek to determine as far as possible, the high priestly activity of our Lord in heaven. Whereas, however, the work of the High Priest in heaven cannot be determined without a knowledge of the work of this High Priest on earth, I feel necessitated to broaden out this dissertation, so as to include the high priestly activity of Christ on earth. Together the work on earth and the work in heaven can, for reasons to be mentioned later, with every propriety be designated as the *heavenly* high priesthood of Christ.

The systematic treatment of the high priesthood of Christ did not really begin before the Protestant Reformation. Until that time in systematic theology the doctrine of atonement had not been subsumed under the *Priesthood* of Christ. The great Reformer Calvin was the first to treat soteriological work of Christ from the viewpoint of the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. This scheme, first worked out by Calvin and adopted since his time, first opened up the possibility for systematic arrangement and detailed treatment of the facts concerning our Lord's high priesthood.

This of course does not imply that the three offices had thus far not been applied to Christ, that Christ had not been thought of as High Priest, nor His Selfsurrender in death considered an offering, nor He as performing high priestly labor in heaven. For the fact is that from the very beginning of the Christian church

our Lord was thought of as being a High Priest. Thus Clement of Rome already speaks of Christ as our ἀρχιερεὺς.¹⁾ Likewise the death of Christ soon began to be spoken of in the Christian church as an offering brought to God. As Dr. Frans Wieland remarks:²⁾ "Man hat sich ganz allgemein, von Anfang der Kirche an, an der Ausdruck gewöhnt: "Christus hat Sich am Kreuz dem himmlischen Vater dargebracht". According to James Orr: The Progress of Dogma p. 219 we read in the Liturgy of Mark: "The Lord Himself delivered Himself up for our sins, and died in the flesh for all. "The Liturgy of James speaks of the offering to God of "this dread and bloodless sacrifice".

Origen is the first theologian to treat the sacrificial work of Christ consistently and at any length as an offering³⁾. By him Isaiah 53 was applied to the suffering of Christ in such a manner, that the offering of the body of Christ on Calvary was represented as having a vicarious nature, and of having been brought to God for the purpose of forgiveness of sins. Origen also speaks of Christ as interceding in heaven throughout all ages by God for the sins of man. Christ is Mediator and High Priest, Who brings our prayers and works as our offering to God, and Who intercedes through His offering and leads us to God.⁴⁾ Largely in consequence of the representation given by Origen, Christ's death gradually became more and more to be conceived by the populace as the offering, whereby God was reconciled.

Eusebius of Ceasarea speaks of Christ as having three offices, those of Prophet, Priest, and King. Just as in the Old Testament high priests, kings, and prophets became typical Christs through anointment (διὰ χρίσματος), so also the name Christ indicates that our Lord unites these three offices in Himself and is worthy of a threefold honor. But the ascription of this threefold office

1) Cf. Corinthians 36 : 1 ; 61 : 3 ; 64.

2) Cf. Der vorirenäische Opferbegriff. p. 195.

3) Cf. R. Seeberg : Dogmengeschichte I p. 432.

4) Cf. Origen : Cata Cels III 34, V 4, VII 46 ; In Leviticum, hom VII 2. Cf. R. Seeberg : Dogmengeschichte I. p. 434.

to Christ did not with Eusebius become the occasion for grouping the work of Christ under these three heads.¹⁾ Gregory of Nyssa, speaking of Christ as High Priest remarks that this title is not to be deduced from the fact that our Lord is called the Christ, the Anointed One, for this title has reference specifically to Christ's Kingship. High Priest is a name given to Christ along with several others, such as Firstborn of Creation, unapproachable light etc., which all can be subsumed under the Kingship of Christ. According to Cyrill of Jerusalem Christ is called Lord because He is eternally anointed by the Father to the superhuman priesthood. To him the name Jesus points to our Lord's Kingship, while the name Christ is indicative of our Lord's high priesthood.²⁾

Especially in the western church the representation of Christ as High Priest, of His death as an offering, and of Christ as interceding in heaven was frequent. This was especially due to the interest which the doctrine of the eucharist there obtained. Since Cyprian's time it was nothing unusual to represent Christ as the Sacerdos, His body as the hostia sancta or viva, brought to God for all believers. The offering of Christ was conceived as a continuous one, reconciling God and freeing from the power of the devil, also when it was brought by the church in the eucharist. In heaven Christ was thought of as continually interceding. From Cyprian onward and throughout the middle ages in increasing measure the offering of Christ became associated with the teaching of the eucharist. The offering of Christ was thought to be perpetually realizing itself by the offering of it in the church as the Body of Christ. In heaven Christ was our continual Intercessor. Both by His offering and by His continued intercession Christ was thought to be reconciling God and procuring forgiveness of sins. These few statements, which indicate the advance of the doctrine in Cyprian's time, also give a fair estimate of the view held of the high priesthood of Christ during the

1) Cf. Eusebius: lib. I c. 3. Krauss: "Das Mittlerswerk nach dem Schema des munus triplex", in *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie* Bd. XVII, p. 596.

2) Gregory of Nyssa: *De Perfectione*, Paris ed, 1615 tom. II, p. 708. Cyrill of Jerusalem: *Catech.* X par. 4, 11, 14, XI I. cf. Krauss ib. 597.

middle ages. For scarcely any new viewpoints were added to it.¹⁾

Augustine speaks of Christ as High Priest, and of His death as His offering brought in our behalf. In *de Civitate Dei*, liber X caput 6, speaking of the true and perfect sacrifice he calls Christ the sacerdotem magnum, qui etiam se ipsum obtulit in passione pro nobis, ut tanti capitis corpus essemus, secundum formam servi. Hanc enim obtulit, in hac oblatus est, quia secundum hanc mediator est, in hac sacerdos, in hac sacrificium est. Likewise in the twentieth chapter of the same book he writes : Unde verus ille mediator, in quantum formam servi accipiens mediator effectus est Dei, et hominum homo Christus Iesus, cum in forma Dei sacrificium cum patre sumat, cum quo et unus Deus est, tamen in forma servi sacrificium maluit esse, quam sumere, ne vel hac occasione ququam existimaret cuilibet sacrificandum esse creaturae. *Per hoc et sacerdos est, ipse offerens, ipse et oblatio*. On the work of Christ as Priest in heaven, in particular His intercession, and its relation to the offering on earth Augustine is not explicit. The work of Christ in heaven is to Augustine largely a mystery.²⁾

According to Gregory the Great the death of Christ is an offering, which Christ continually offers to God for our cleansing. This with Gregory must be explained in connection with teaching on the eucharist. Just as the priest in the Eucharist is continually offering the body of Christ, so the same thought was ascribed to Christ Himself. Gregory also ascribes the work of intercession to Christ. However, in this work Christ does not occupy a unique position. Our Lord's intercession is only one of many similar intercessions, such as of angels, saints, alms, and masses for the dead. With Gregory and during the middle ages the intercession of Christ is drawn into and must be explained in connection with the penance system, of which it forms a part³⁾.

1) Cf. Cyprian ; Carm. adv. Marc. IV 80 ; II 75, 113 ff. 98 ; IV 136. Cyprian ; Cc.-orig. tract. 19, p. 204, tract. 19 p. 102 tract. 10 p. 106, tr. 6 p. 67, 14 p. 159 ; Cyprian : Ep. 11, 5, 55, 18. Cf. R. Seeberg : Dogmengeschichte I Zweite Auflage 1908 p. 538, 539.

2) Cf. Augustine on the Symbolum I c. 4. Cf. Otto Scheel : Die Anschauung Augustins über Christi Person und Werk pp. 470 ff.

3) Cf. Gregory : Moral. 1, 24, also cf. Moral. I 1. Cf. Harnack : Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte Third ed. 1897 Bd. III p. 244 (236, 237) 302, (291, 292).

With Thomas Aquinas we find the priesthood of Christ more broadly discussed. He devotes in his *Summa Theologica* (Pars III, Quaestio 22) six articles to the discussion of the topic. He answers the questions, whether Christ can fitly be called High Priest, whether He was Priest and Sacrifice in one, whether the effect of Christ's priesthood is expiation of sins, whether the effect of Christ's priesthood is only for others or also for Himself, whether the priesthood of Christ remains in eternity, and whether Christ was a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, each of which questions is answered in the affirmative. The priesthood after the order of Melchizedek indicates the eternity of Christ's priesthood and its superior excellence as regards the Person of the Priest and the quality of the offering above the Levitical. The inscripturated Melchizedek, not the historical person, prefigures the eternity of Christ. The death of Christ was His offering whereby He rendered a full satisfaction to God's penal justice. The effect of this offering was full expiation of the sins of His people. The priesthood of Christ was chiefly manifested in His passion and death. This priesthood can be said to remain in eternity not as if the passion and death itself were eternal, but because the sacrifice has an eternal effect, because it is the basis of an *eternal* salvation, because the virtue of Christ's blood shed on Calvary remains in eternity. Christ is also acknowledged by Thomas Aquinas to be our Intercessor in heaven. However, the relation of this heavenly intercession to Christ's priesthood and to His offering is not clearly defined.¹⁾

The Protestant Reformation marks the beginning of the systematic development of the doctrine of Christ's high priesthood. Both by Lutheran and Reformed theologians the doctrine from the beginning received systematic treatment. As regards essentials there was unity of thought on this subject between both branches of the Reformation.²⁾

1) Cf. Thomas Aquinas : *Summa Theologica*, Pars III Qu. 22 and Qu. 26, Art. 2.

2) For a detailed treatment of the views of the several Lutheran and Reformed theologians Cf. W. Gass : *Geschichte der Protestantischen Dogmatik*, 1854 Vol. I. Gustav Frank : *Geschichte der Protestantischen Theologie*, 1862 Vol. I. H. Heppe : *Dogmatik des Deutschen Protestantismus im 16 Jahrhundert* Second ed. 1857 Vol. II. Köstlin : *Luther's Theologie*.

However, at the beginning of the Reformation, in the formation period of the creeds there were differences on minor points, especially as to the range of Christ's priesthood. Thus in the Reformed branch from the very start Christ's office was considered to be threefold and the work of Christ as High Priest clearly distinguished from His work as Prophet and King.¹⁾ On the other hand in the Lutheran theology in the first period, Christ's office was conceived of as twofold. The prophetic office was subsumed under the priesthood. The priesthood was limited to Christ's redemptive work on earth. And the intercession formed part of the kingship of Christ, which was the office which Christ fulfilled in heaven. Ever since the time of Haffenreffer, Hutter, and especially Gerhard, the Reformed division into three offices was adopted also by Lutheran theologians.²⁾

But that there was no essential difference between the two branches of the Reformation on this doctrine is clear from a comparison of the representation given of the priesthood when once this doctrine attained to its developed form. A comparison of Gerhard with say Heidegger will reveal how close the similarity was on the teaching of Christ's priesthood. The priesthood to both Reformed and Lutherans included the offering on earth and the intercession in heaven.³⁾ Christ is High Priest according to both natures, the divine and human. He is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The priesthood on earth included both His active and His passive obedience. The offering of Christ was *Himself*, a pure and spotless offering and this offering was brought to God. By it Christ rendered full and perfect satisfaction to God's penal justice, stilled God's righteous anger, blotted out the guilt of sin, reestablished right relations with God, and earned the blessings of salvation. By it also Christ opened the way for Himself as High Priest, and for His people into the heavenly Holiest. The heavenly function of Christ as High Priest consists in His inter-

1) Calvin's Institutes Second Edition 1543.

2) Cf. H. Hepp: Dogmatik des Deutschen Protestantismus p. 212.

3) Cf. Heidelberg Catechism. Gerhard: Loci Theol. IV c. XV 323.

cession. This function is closely associated with the kingship as the office through which Christ makes believers possessors of the blessings of the intercession. In His intercession the heavenly High Priest is continually bringing into memory the sacrifice on Calvary as the ground for His intercessory prayer. The intercession is therefore conceived of as the rendering effective of the sacrificial death. The intercession is not as in the state of humiliation an humble petition, but in conformity with the state of exaltation a petition with power on the basis of the sacrifice brought on earth. By many Lutheran theologians the intercession was held to be *vocalis, verbalis, et oralis*.¹⁾ The Reformed abstained from these extremes. The Lutherans made a distinction between Christ's general and His special intercession. The first included all men, the second only the elect. The Reformed, arguing that Christ's intercession was always effective, held it to be only for the believers. In the intercession Christ petitioned not only for the ultimate salvation, but as well for the individual help of the several believers. Through the interceding High Priest the entire intercourse of believers is mediated, not only the blessings which they must receive from God, but also what they must render to God, their prayers and thanksgiving offerings. In Christ believers are made priests and through Him they can enter the holiest and bring to God acceptable offerings. This priesthood of Christ and His offering once for all argues against any repetition of the offering as made in the mass by the church of Rome.²⁾

The above is a brief sketch of the view of Christ's high priesthood held by the Reformers. This view called forth a strong opposition from the Socinians. In order to understand their view of Christ's priesthood in its opposition to the orthodox position, we must study it in its relation to the Socinian system as a whole. Hence a brief sketch of the fundamental principles of Socinianism may help us to understand their view on Christ's high priesthood. The fundamental principle of Socinianism is the absolute dualism of

1) Cf. Chas. Hodge : Dogmatics 1872 II p. 593.

2) Cf. for the contents of this paragraph : Calvin : Institutiones II 15, 6 II 16, 2, Gerhard : Loci Theologici Loc. IV cap. XV.

the Infinite and finite, of God and man.¹⁾ This fundamental principle was, however, not carried out to its last consequence. Man in his reason was thought to possess a faculty enabling him to receive and understand the revelation coming from God. Man by nature can have no knowledge of God.²⁾ However revelation can be *supra rationem*, but not *contra rationem*. The criterion which decides whether revelation is indeed from God is the "*ratio sana*". The bible was authoritative in matters of faith not as for the Reformers, in its entirety, but only insofar as it taught what is necessary to know for eternal life, the *ratio sana* sitting as judge to determine what must and what must not be believed.

Man has attained to a knowledge of God because God of His own free will chose to reveal Himself. There was nothing in God that necessitated Him to this act. The highest attribute in God which most characterizes Him is absolute arbitrariness.³⁾ God by an arbitrary will determined that man, by nature mortal, should be raised to an eternal (i.e. unending) life, a *donum superadditum* not inherent in man's nature. To accomplish this His design God, likewise of His own arbitrary choice called into being the Man Jesus Christ, Whom He endowed with divine powers. Christ was not God but a Man, in all essentials like unto other men. He differed from them merely in certain attributes God had given Him. He differed physically, in that He was by a wonder (a supernatural element in the Socinian system) born of a virgin. Ethically, in that He was without sin and guilt, and possessed a life which was in complete harmony with God's will. And to Him was given divine power. By virtue of this divine power He was exalted to the rank of God and can receive divine honors.

The duty which Christ has to perform, or His office, is to effect

1) Cf. Otto Fock : *Der Socinianismus* p. 689. Fock : *Der Princ. der Socin. Dogmatik in Ztschr. f. hist. Th.* 1845 H. 2. Gustav. Frank : *Geschichte der Protestantischen Theologie* p. 349. The sketch of the Socinian system here following I have taken chiefly from Otto Fock : *Der Socinianismus*.

2) So F. Socinus. Later Socinians as Volkelius, Ostorodt, Crell, and Wiszowaty accept that man has a natural knowledge of God, and by his reason can judge and criticize the revealed religion, Cf. Kühler : *Het Socinianisme in Nederland* p. 235, 236

3) Cf. Harnack : *Dogmengeschichte* p. 707.

God's will to give eternal life. Accordingly the office of Christ is twofold ; He is prophet to reveal God's will, King to carry out God's will. Prophet He was on earth, King He is in heaven. The Socinian writings speak also of the priestly office of Christ. However, there is no inner ground in the Socinian system that called for a priestly office. The ascription of a priestly office to Christ is rather to be explained from an attempt to satisfy those statements of scripture, that represent Him as High Priest, and as a polemic against the orthodox view¹). A glance at the relative amount of space allotted in the Socinian Catechism to the discussion of the prophetic and the priestly offices of Christ will reveal how unessential the priestly office is to the Socinian and of what primal importance the prophetic office is. In reality what is subsumed under the priestly office of Christ is nothing more than a part of the kingly office.

The Christian religion — which in His prophetic office has revealed, — contains no mystical elements of union of finite man with the infinite God, but is purely external and consists in commands and promises. This revelation Christ received not in any preexistent state nor by virtue of deity, nor by inner enlightenment, but by His "raptus in coelum" which took place before His public career²). In His prophetic office Christ declared the free will of God to give unending life to all such as would yield to Him a life of faith. This declaration Christ confirmed by signs and wonders. Faith, however, the conditional cause of justification and eternal life, is not the instrumental cause of justification in the same sense as it was to the Reformers. The real justifying element in faith was the obedience which it involved. Absolute obedience to God's commands was not possible for sinful man, hence faith was the condition set by God for justification, namely a (not perfect, but) Godward conduct. The working cause of justification and eternal life, however, is alone the free arbitrary will of God. — No real union is brought about between God and man,

1) Cf. Harnack : *Dogmengeschichte* p. 712.

2) Cf. John. 3 : 13, 31 ; 6 : 36 etc.

either by Christ or by the believer himself, but the dualism between these two is carried through also in the ethical sphere.

The death of Christ — also a part of the prophetic office of Christ — has the significance of being an example for man of piety and a desire to do what is right under extremest conditions, without which it is impossible to be saved. At the same time the experience of death enables Christ to give positive help to believers in like circumstances. While from the side of God the death of Christ — with which the resurrection must be taken as one — gave to man the assurance of the love and beneficent intention of God to reward the obedience of faith with eternal life. For by the resurrection of Christ we have an example, proving that those who obey God are freed from even the bitterest death, and that Christ indeed has the power to help us and to give eternal life.

The priestly office of Christ is by the Socinians transferred wholly to the heavenly sphere. It is true, the death of Christ is spoken of in connection with His priestly office¹). Just as the offering on the Day of Atonement fell into two parts, the killing of the animal in the court and the offering of the blood in the holiest, so also in the case of Christ's offering. But neither in the Old Testament offerings nor in the case of Christ was the death a constituent part of the offering, but merely preliminary to it. In the Levitical offering the killing was performed by the offerer, while the real priestly work only began with the action with the blood. The real offering was made in the holy of holies. So also in the case of Christ. His real offering was made in the heavenly Holy of Holies. He there offered His glorified body to God. Christ has gone to heaven there to atone for our sins. This atonement, however, is nothing else than the freeing from the punishment of sin and from the service of sin, Christ frees from the punishment of sin by guarding us through His divine power received from God and by warding off the divine anger which otherwise would come upon the sinner, through His intercession. However, the intercession does not signify that Christ in very deed prays to God

1) Cf. Cat, Rac. De Munere Chr. Sacerdotale qu. 9, F. Socinus : De Servat. J. C. II c. XIII.

for us. That would be contradictory to the power, which He has received from God. It only means to impress upon our minds the fact that the kingly power which Christ has, He has not of Himself, but as a gift of God.¹⁾ And Christ frees from the service of sin by drawing us away from sin without thereby limiting our freedom, and by the example of His own life, which shows what reward he receives, who steadfastly refrains from sin.²⁾

Such in brief is the doctrine of the Socinians in so far as it interests us here. It will be seen that the Socinian doctrine with its fundamental principle of absolute dualism between the infinite and finite, everywhere carried through, so that after redemption nothing but an arbitrary union exists between God and man and the chasm virtually remains between the infinite God and finite man, is in flat contradiction to the view the Reformers held of the work of Christ. The Socinians, proceeding upon this fundamental principle, and having the conception of God as a Being Whose highest or distinctive attribute was an arbitrary will, could not help clashing with the orthodox view. To the Socinians the atonement as satisfaction to God's penal justice was neither necessary nor possible; mercy and justice excluding one another and forgiveness of sins being due to the arbitrary will of God. To the Reformers an atoning sacrifice rendered in response to the demands of justice was both possible and necessary, God by His inner nature being impelled to require satisfaction and finding in the atoning death of the cross that which satisfied His justice. And to them mercy and justice, forgiveness and satisfaction were not mutually exclusive ideas. To the Socinians the atonement was subjective, God not needing to be reconciled, since He was always willing, but man needed to be reconciled. To the Reformers the atonement was objective, being a restitution to God's violated law. To those the priestly activity of Christ was in reality manward,

1) Cf. Cat. Rac. : De Munere Christi Sacerdotali last question. F. Socinus. De J. C. Servat, II c. 22.

2) Cf. Cat. Rac. : De Munere Christi Sacerdotali qu. 5. Cf. further on Socinian doctrine of Christ's High priesthood : F. Socinus : Disputationes de J. C. Salvatore in F. Socini : Operum Tomus 1656 p. 111. Cf. Animad. in Joh. Niemojevii p. 444. Tract. de Justif, p. 297, and further the literature mentioned in Fock : Der Socinianismus.

to these Godward. To those the forgiveness of sins was the indirect result of a Christian life, to these it lay at the basis of it.

What wonder that with the principle of absolute dualism between God and man, and their theory that forgiveness and eternal life were a matter of divine caprice, the Socinians should strive to undo the death of Christ of the nature of penal satisfaction to God's justice ascribed to it by the Reformers. By rational arguments they sought to involve the orthodox doctrine in hopeless contradictions. Satisfaction to justice was not possible, since mercy and justice, forgiveness and satisfaction are mutually exclusive. Nor was it necessary, since also in the Old Testament God forgave without satisfaction, The active and passive obedience of Christ exclude each other. Vicarious satisfaction is impossible. And were it possible Christ could only have suffered for one. The dignity of Christ's divinity would give to Christ's offering a worth that would make the suffering of death superfluous.¹⁾

By transferring the priestly office entirely to heaven, it became the more possible to affix another meaning to the death as well as to the intercessory work of Christ. The death then became a part of the prophetic office in the manner described above. The priestly office was virtually a part of Christ's kingship and amounted to a mere position of influence with God. By it He was able to succour us and give eternal life. For this doctrine they sought the support of scripture. Especially Hebrews was appealed to. However, the appeal to scripture was of the nature of an afterthought, since the theory was firmly fixed before investigation. They argued from such texts in Hebrews that either express or imply the thought that Christ is High Priest in the heavenly tabernacle, or "became" High Priest after the death and at His entrance to heaven, Cf. 2 : 17, 5 : 8 — 10, 6 : 20, 7 : 26—28 ; 1—6 ; 9 : 11 ff. 24 ; 10 : 12—14, 21.²⁾ And such texts as the Reformers adduced as proving that Christ had offered Himself once for all to take away sins they sought to explain in such a way that the body of Christ which had been given in death, was first

1) F. Socinus : *De J. C. Servat.* I cap. 7, 8, III 3.

2) For the discussion of these texts cf. chapter VI.

offered at the entrance of Christ into heaven in the Selfpresentation to the Father. Cf. 7 : 27, 8 : 3 ; 9 : 14, 24—28 ; 10 : 10, 12—14.¹⁾

From two sides there arose opposition to this Socinian doctrine of Christ's priesthood, from the side of the Lutheran and Reformed theologians, and from the side of the Remonstrants. As chief opponents of the Socinians may be named : of the Lutherans, Gerhard and Hutter, of the Reformed, Maresius, Arnoldi, Hoornbeek, De Witte, and Heidanus ; of the Remonstrants, Episcopius, Van Limborch, and Curcellaeus. It would lead us beyond the purpose of this historical introduction to enter into a discussion of the defense of the Reformers of their doctrine of Christ's death as a penal satisfaction over against the Socinians. Suffice it to say that they aimed by a series of arguments to prove that penal justice was as much an attribute of God as His mercy, that the mercy of God to sinners and His justice to them could only be harmonized through the death of Christ as penal satisfaction to God's justice, that Christ's sufferings and death were the just equivalent for those of the believers though not in all points the same, that the death could suffice for not only one but for all believers, inasmuch as Christ their Representative through the union of His divine and human natures by His Godhead added inestimable worth to His sacrifice, and that though Christ's death rendered satisfaction to justice, yet that fact did not preclude the possibility of God's grace being revealed in it. etc. They rightly contended that on the Socinian view Christ was no real High Priest, nor His offering a real offering, nor His intercession a real intercession. The function of Christ as Priest was nothing more than a part of His Kingship. His offering in heaven was no real offering brought for men *to God*, but, conversely, it consisted in the will to help us in our infirmities, to redeem us by His power both from the condemnation of sin and from deeds of sin. His intercession was no real intercession or approach to God on our behalf, but only a sign of the power which the Father had given Him.²⁾

1) F. Socinus : De J. C. Servat. II cap. 15, 21, 23, 26.

2) Cf. De Witte : Wederlegginge der Sociniaensche Dwalingen 1658 II p. 152.

The arguments upon which the Reformers, however, chiefly depended, were the arguments from scripture. From passages adduced especially from Hebrews they sought to prove over against the opposite contentions of the Socinians that all the Old Testament offerings and not merely that of the Day of Atonement were typical of Christ's offering, that for all, also deadly sins there was atonement through those sacrifices, and that these did not atone of their own power, but by virtue of their being shadows of the one atonement offering brought on Golgotha.¹⁾ Christ was Priest on earth as well as in heaven, and He brought His one offering for sin on Calvary, and this offering made atonement for sin. The passages which they adduced as proof were Hebrews 5 : 1, 7 : 27, 9 : 15, 24—28 10 : ; 10—14, 20 etc.²⁾ However the texts which speak of an offering of Christ in heaven did not receive full justice. Such texts were explained either as having reference to the offering of the cross, or, as later by Heidegger, as speaking of an offering *impropiè dicta*, which was nothing more than the bringing to remembrance the offering of the cross in the intercession. Heidegger divides the offering of Christ into three parts : *Voluntaria oblatio sui ipsius in victimam ; mors ; representatio seu oblatio hostiae in coelo*. This third part to him coincides with the intercession³⁾.

The offering in heaven and the intercession were not kept distinct. The intercession was from such texts as 5 : 1, 7 : 25 Romans 8 : 34 shown to be a real and efficacious prayer of Christ to God for His people.

Also from another quarter there arose opposition to the Socinian view of Christ's high priesthood. Already the later Socinians as Crellius, Schlichting, Wiszowati, and the later editions of the Rakou Catechism⁴⁾ sought to give more place to the death of Christ in His offering. Also Hugo Grotius sought to defend the orthodox

1) Cf. Arnoldi p. 684 qu. 5, 6 ; De Witte 142, 144, 148—151.

2) Cf. Arnoldi 682—683. De Witte vol. II. 156—170, 180—182, 203. For the discussion of these texts cf. chapter VI.

3) Cf. Heidegger par. 55, 92).

4) Cf. the edition of 1665.

view over against the Socinians. But his moral theory which represented Christ as having suffered the punishment of death as an example for mankind, was in last analysis subjective as well as the Socinian view and represented the offering of Christ as performed with a view to man, not to God. But those to whom I here have reference are the Arminians. They sought to occupy middle ground between the Socinian and the orthodox view¹). It was their aim to give Christ's offering significance with reference to God, and to include the death in the offering. Limborch speaks of the Socinian view as a bare and idle presentation which has no force with God²). With the Reformers they objected that the Socinian theory made Christ no real Priest, nor His offering a real offering. What the Socinians ascribed to the priesthood, the Prophet and King can do. Their arguments against the Socinians were largely the same as those of the Reformed. Just as in the case of the typical offerings of the Old Testament, so they argued, also the offering of Christ must have a reference *to God*, be brought with a view to redeem us from our sins. We by our sins have made ourselves guilty before God, hence Christ must die for us to pay the ransom price of our redemption. If Christ had only died to confirm His doctrine and reveal God's beneficent intention to forgive sins, then it is hard to see why the death of a martyr would not have availed as well. Limborch points to the prepositions *ὐπέρ, περί* used in connection with Christ's death, to texts that speak of Christ as a *ἱλαστήριον* for our sins, of the "blood of Christ" as proving that Christ's death was indeed of the nature of an offering brought *to God* as a redemption for our sins³).

To this extent the Remonstrants take sides with the Reformers against the Socinians. They, however, take issue with the Reformers on the matter of the nature of atonement wrought by Christ's offering. To them the offering of the death of Christ was not as with the Reformers a full satisfaction to the demands of God's justice. The arguments with which they endeavored to prove this

1) Cf. v. Limborch V 22 p. 262.

2) Cf. Limborch : Theol. Christ. Lib. III cap. XX.

3) Cf. Limborch : Theol. Christ. Lib. III Cap. 5—7.

contention were borrowed from the arsenal of the Socinians. Mercy and justice they claimed were mutually exclusive. If Christ has paid the price of justice, then God can ask nothing, not even that we merit justification by faith, nor by a life of faith show gratitude, since Christ then has fulfilled ask nothing, not even that we merit justification by faith, nor by a life of faith show gratitude, since Christ then has fulfilled the whole law. There was no inner necessity in God that compelled Him to punish sins. It was, however, necessary to reveal God's glory, to show His hatred to sin, which fact men could not appreciate had there not been any expiatory sacrifice, to reveal God as the Vindicator of injustice, and to create in man a desire for holiness. The death of Christ is indeed an offering made to God. It is not, however, a payment of the debt of sin, a full satisfaction to justice, but *the condition* upon which God out of free grace forgives sin. Christ did not suffer what we should have suffered. Christ's death can be called a punishment for sin, insofar as the death of the cross which Christ freely assumed, took, the place of the punishment which we had merited. Christ's offering, although it was no full satisfaction to justice, was so well-pleasing to God that He was moved by it to accept us in grace. But though Christ's death to the Remonstrants is a real offering and not as the Socinians merely a step preliminary to it, yet the offering is not to be limited to the death. It was there begun, but as proved from Hebrews 9 : 8, 12 ; 10 : 19—21 ; 9 : 24 ; 11 : consummated in heaven, when Christ presented Himself or symbolically speaking, His "blood", to God in heaven. However, as little as with the Reformers is the offering in heaven kept distinct from the intercession, but the one is said to be included in the other. The intercession to Limborch can be subsumed under the offering in heaven, or be conceived of as its immediate inseparable effect. The presentation of Himself, begun in the offering in heaven is continued in the intercession. The offering can be defined as the intercession inchoate, the intercession as the offering continued. Thus the intercession is with the Reformed viewed as the bringing to fruition of what the death stood for, although they differ as in what sense the death was offering for sin. To the offering and

intercession (like the Reformers) can be added the work of benediction, although this work can also with propriety be subsumed under the offering and the intercession. By His intercession Christ saves from death and gives eternal life to the believers.¹⁾

On the history of the doctrine of the heavenly high priesthood for a century following the Socinian and the Remonstrant controversies, there is nothing new to record.²⁾ Among the Lutheran and Reformed theologians of that period, insofar as they do not reveal tendencies to Remonstrantism and rationalism, the teaching on the heavenly high priesthood of Christ remains the same. And for the Rationalism of that age the subject of what Christ as High Priest did in heaven lost its interest. The rationalism, already present in the Socinian theory, in which the "ratio sana" sat as judge to determine the veracity of the content of revelation and the bible, in the eighteenth century came to full development. Whereas in the Socinian system it was still tempered by bits of supernaturalism and by such statements from scripture which crossed their system though not forming an essential part of it, it now freed itself from any such restraints. Whereas the interest did not centre around the details of the church dogmas as much as around dogma as such, it is only natural that we should not find anything of interest on a detailed point as the heavenly high priesthood of Christ. The more because Christ the Prophet much more than Christ the Priest interests the rationalist.³⁾

It would take us too far afield to discuss here separately various views on the sacrifice of Christ given by such adherents of the moral theory of atonement as Bushnell, Macleod Campbell, Young, and Ritschl. With the Socinians they hold in common that Christ's offering was not brought to satisfy demands of God's penal justice, but for the sake of the moral influence it created upon the minds of men. They all agree that Christ gave Himself Sacrifice as a

1) Cf. Van Limborch : *Theol. Christ.* III c. XIX 16.

2) Cf. e. g. De Moor : *Comment. in Marcii Compendium* III 910 ff. M. Vitringa : *Doctrina Christianae Religionis* V 402 ff.

3) Cf. K. F. A. Kahnis : *Der innere Gang des Deutschen Protestantismus seit Mitte des vorigen Jahrhunderts.* Second ed. 1860 p. 128 ff.

Of the various blessings which Christ procures for His people through His intercession, the chief is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, already present in Old Testament believers, has now, since the ascension, become specifically the Spirit of Jesus. The Holy Spirit interpenetrates our Lord's human and divine natures. But the believers with, by, and in Christ receive His Holy Spirit, so that they become spiritually one with Christ and His energies pass over into their life.¹⁾

As a corollary to the principle that the church exists as the Body of Christ and as the Body lives in the closest communion with the Head by virtue of the common Spirit pervading both, it follows that "whatever Christ is or does the church must in a measure be or do."²⁾ Hence also whatever function Christ discharges in heaven must also be discharged, according to her capabilities and opportunities by His church on earth"³⁾ Therefore also church must offer and this offering of the church is an organic part of the offering of her Head in heaven". As our Lord's offering of Himself to His heavenly Father never ends nor can end, so in that offering His people, organically united to Him, one with Him, must be offered, and must offer themselves; and this they do in the expressive and touching symbols of the eucharist"⁴⁾ In the sacrament of the supper, in short, they offer themselves in Him, Who is now and forever an offering to the Father."⁵⁾

The discussion of this and other theories must be left for the exegetic and dogmatic sections. It may however here be pointed out that we have in the theory of Dr. Milligan virtually a revival in modified form of the Socinian view of Christ's priesthood. Both deny that the act of death undergone as a penal substitution for sinful man was the offering which Christ brought to God. According to both "blood" in sacrifice represents the life not the death of the victim. To both the atoning part of the sacrifice is the ap-

1) Cf. Milligan Ascension Lecture V p.p. 227 ff.

2) Cf. W. Milligan : Expositor Vol. IX 1889 p. 200.

3) Cf. Milligan : Expositor Vol. IX 1889 p. 200.

4) Milligan ; Ascension p. 266.

5) Similar statements can be found by G. Milligan : The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

plication of the blood, as well in the case of the Old Testament sacrifices as in the case of Christ's sacrifice. To both the condition upon which justification and salvation depends is simply a life of devotion to God although Dr. Milligan lays more stress on the vicarious act that it is the life of Christ, *offered to God* that forms the condition of atonement. To both the high priesthood of Christ is transferred almost exclusively to heaven. Although to both Christ can in a sense be called a High Priest in His death, yet the important part of His high priesthood, of His offering, is to be found in heaven in the application of His blood, in the offering of His glorified life unto God. Lastly, to both the offering of Christ in heaven is unceasing.¹⁾

A very subtle and noteworthy theory of the priesthood of Christ is the one given by Bishop Wescott in his commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is not possible in this brief historical introduction to do justice to a view as complex and comprehensive as that of Bishop Wescott. But in outline it may be sketched as follows: "Man is born religious." "He was endowed at creation with faculties by which he might attain to a divine fellowship and finally share in the divine rest".²⁾ The condition upon the fulfillment of which he was to arrive at this destiny was absolute obedience to God. "Even if man had not sinned, he would have needed divine help, to reach this destiny"³⁾. Also as the quotation from Psalm VIII in the second chapter of Hebrews indicates, man was destined to rule over the present world. Sin, however, has made it impossible for man to attain to his destiny of divine fellowship and the promised rulership. Man therefore has missed the true end of his creation. At the fall God did not, however, revoke His promise regarding the destiny of man, but renewed it and raised it to a higher form. It was God's pleasure that man should still attain to the divine fellowship and now become ruler over the world to come.⁴⁾ To effect this destiny of man under conditions obtaining

1) Cf. further on the theory of Milligan the exegetical portion pp. 66 ff. 127 ff.

2) Cf. Wescott: Hebrews p. 139.

3) P. 139.

4) Cf. p. 61.

after the fall, is the work of a priest, in particular of Christ as High Priest.¹⁾ The duty devolving upon Christ as High Priest for man is twofold: By the application of the virtue of the blood of His offering, He must remove every impurity which hindered the approach to God of those whom He represented, and thus enable His cleansed people to sustain the awful fellowship for which man was made. Also by His absolute Self-sacrifice He must fulfill the condition of creation of perfect obedience to God, and thereby attain to the promised rulership and divine fellowship. And secondly after having righted the relations of man with God, and having obtained by fulfillment of the condition of obedience the destined fellowship and rulership, He must as High Priest-King "enter in His humanity upon the full enjoyment of every privilege won by His perfect fulfillment of the will of God, and apply for the benefit of men the fruits of the atonement which He has completed"²⁾ The first duty Christ fulfilled as Antitype of Aaron, as the One Who fulfilled the Levitical order. The second duty Christ accomplishes when in His present work in heaven He fulfills the order of Melchizedek.

As the High Priest Who fulfilled the order of Aaron, Christ "offered Himself upon the cross and humanity in Himself, and (secondly) entering before God through His own blood realized the abiding fellowship of man and God in His glorified humanity, openly seen before the face of God"³⁾ This second act was the heavenly antitype of "the bringing of the blood of the victim as a hallowing power to the Mercy seat, the crowning service of the Aaronic priest"⁴⁾ This work completed, Christ sat down at the right hand of God and assumed the royal high priesthood after the type of Melchizedek. The work of Christ in this capacity is threefold: Christ intercedes for men as their present Representative before God. Christ brings the prayers and praises of His people to God, embodying their true spiritual desires, so that at

1) Cf. p. 139, 229.

2) Cf. p. 231.

3) P. 230.

4) Cf. p. 230.

each moment they become articulate through His Spirit and are brought through Him to the throne". And "Christ secures access for His people in their present state to the holy place, where He Himself is, in His Blood — the virtue of His earthly life lived and offered".¹⁾

The essence of the one offering for sin which Christ has brought on Calvary and at His entrance to heaven was His "blood", symbolically considered. This "blood", however, as little as with Dr. Milligan, signifies the act of death which Christ experienced as a vicarious punishment for the sins of His people. The blood to Wescott²⁾ is symbolical of the life offered, of an absolute obedience rendered. "The blood of Christ was the energy of Christ's true human life".³⁾ Already for the fulfillment of the destiny of man *as created* Christ would have had to have offered this life; i.e. have had to bring an absolute obedience, even though sin had not interrupted the due course of man's progress and relation to God".⁴⁾ Bishop Wescott holds, therefore, the necessity of the incarnation of Christ even apart from sin. Whereas, however, because of sin death has to be borne by men, the life of absolute obedience under conditions of the fall involved for Christ the surrender of His life in death. "Death with its unnatural agony was the condition, under the actual circumstances of the fall, whereby the life of the Son of Man could be made available for the race".⁵⁾ That life wherein we notice from first to last a perfect obedience to the will of God, forms the essence of Christ's sacrifice. This sacrifice, insofar as it relates to sin, has a power retrospectively and prospectively: it is a means of atonement and it is a means of (ethical) purification. Two series of blessings follow from Christ's sacrifice, "the one series answering to the restoration of man's right relation to God which has been violated by sin, and the other answering to the fulfillment of the purpose of creation, the

1) Cf. 231.

2) Cf. Wescott: Note on 1 John 1:7 and Note on Hebrews 9:12 p. 295.

3) Cf. p. 300, 296.

4) Cf. p. 300.

5) Cf. p. 300.

attainment by man of Divine likeness.”¹⁾ The satisfaction rendered to God by Christ is therefore to Westcott not restitution to His penal justice, but a (human) life of absolute obedience to God. This atoned for sin as well as secured the original destiny of man.

When the application of this atonement was made by Christ’s offering in heaven, and Christ by this offering had accomplished the original destiny of man, He entered upon the fulness of His work as High Priest-King. In other words He entered for Himself and for His people ”in His humanity upon the full enjoyment of every privilege won by the perfect fulfillment of the will of God.”²⁾ Or otherwise stated, He became High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek represents the original priesthood of man. This priesthood which involves kingship, Christ had restored ~~red~~ and is now enjoying in His session at God’s right hand. As Melchizedekian High Priest our Lord is leading men up to this glorified humanity by His heavenly intercession in the manner described above. As Melchizedekian High Priest He does not offer a sacrifice ; He simply blesses, ”that is communicates the fruits of an efficacious sacrifice already made³⁾ This intercession however must not be thus understood as if Christ were in it pleading His passion. For, according to Wescott, ”the modern (?) conception of Christ pleading in heaven His passion, offering His blood in behalf of men, has no foundation in the epistle.” ”His glorified humanity (without any special intercessory act) is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His work. He pleads, as older writers truly expressed the thought, by His Presence on the Father’s throne”⁴⁾ In Jesus Christ believers are incorporated as His Body. As such they share His life, and as such also they in the eucharist participate in the sacrifice brought by Christ.⁵⁾

Another view of Christ’s high priesthood here to be mentioned is that of Dr. A. Kuyper. As to Bishop Wescott so also to Dr. Kuyper, Melchizedek represents the original priesthood of man.

1) Cf. p. 300.

2) Cf. p. 231.

3) Cf. p. 203.

4) Cf. p. 232.

5) Cf. p. 342 and Wescott on The Gospel of John VI.

God had, when He created man, implanted the priesthood in man's very nature. This consisted in devoting all that he was and all that he possessed to his Creator. Sin is the cause of the cessation of this priesthood, since by it the priestly relation of man to God was severed. The task of him who is to be man's priest has therefore become twofold ; i.e. to reconcile man to God and, secondly, to perform the original task of the priesthood for which man was designed by his Creator. The consciousness that man must be priest and the attempt to maintain this original priesthood we notice appearing for the last time in Melchizedek. True, Melchizedek does not represent the original priesthood in its uncontaminated form — his is a ruins —, nevertheless it is at any rate a representation of it. Since the original priesthood had become an impossibility after the fall, God ordained that in the fulness of time the Messiah should come and reestablish this original condition in all its former beauty. Meanwhile in order to make an end to the existing form of that priesthood, which in Melchizedek was seen to be impoverished and powerless, and to prepare by mingled type and prophesy the perfect Melchizedekian priesthood to come in the Messiah, God instituted the priesthood of Aaron. This priesthood supplanted for a time, be it only as a shadow and in a ceremonial sense, both the original Melchizedek priesthood and the priesthood of reconciliation which had arisen because of sin. But after the Messiah came and had brought His sacrifice for sin, and thus had fulfilled the priesthood of Aaron and thereby made an end of it, the original Melchizedek priesthood again superseded the temporary priesthood due to sin. In heaven therefore as High Priest-King, Christ the incarnate and glorified Lord represents this Melchizedek priesthood of man into all eternity. Through Christ, likewise, believers are made Melchizedekian priests. This original or Melchizedek priesthood stands related to the Aaronic as the essential, the real priesthood of man to that which consisted only in shadows, and as the universal to that which was bound up to a nation, tribe, and generation of men.¹⁾

1) Cf. Dr. A. Kuyper : *E Voto Dordraceno* p. 306—218. *Dictaten Dogmatiek : Locus de Christo (pars tertia)* pp. 89—99. *Gemeene Gratie* pp.

In conclusion I want to point to the question of the relation of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ to the eucharist as taught by the church of Rome and by some High Church men in the church of Engeland. From the teaching of Scripture that a priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, and that Christ is a Priest forever, it has been concluded, that in the eucharist in some sense there must be a material and propitiatory sacrifice. The question is in a way a vital one, and deserves far more discussion than I can give to it here. All I can do in this introduction is to state in outline the views that are held. The official doctrine of the church of Rome on the subject can be found in the articles of the Council of Trent. These present the following view :¹⁾ "By the consecration of the bread and the wine a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood" (Dec. Conc. Trident Sess. XIII cap. 4) "Forasmuch as, in this Divine sacrifice, which is celebrated in the mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner Who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross, the holy Synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and that by means thereof this is effected — that we obtain mercy and find grace if we draw nigh contrite and penitent" etc. (Twenty second session. cap. 2.) "Wherefore, not only for the sins etc. of the faithful who are living, but also for those who are departed in Christ, and not yet fully purified, it is rightly offered" (ib.) — The view of Roman Catholic theologians as to how this official doctrine of the mass is to be interpreted, is by no means consistent. Various theories are afloat regarding in what sense the mass can be called a propitiatory sacrifice, and how Christ is present in it.²⁾ However, speaking generally, there

1) Cf. W. P. Patterson : Art. Sacrifice in Hastings Bible Dictionary, from whom I quote).

2) Cf. for the various theories Pell in Theol. prakt. Monatschr. 13 Bd. II: Heft 641—675. Renz : Geschichte des Messopferbegriffs Quoted by F. Wieland in Der Vor-irenäische Opferbegriff pp. 200—201. Cf. Also for a refutation of the most of these theories by two of their own men the work of Pell here mentioned and Frans Wieland : Vorirenäische Opferbegriff pp. 280—229.

is an older and a more modern form, in which the argument for the perpetuation of the offering of Christ in the mass has been presented.¹⁾ The older view holds that Christ cannot possibly be offering a sacrifice in heaven. And whereas Christ's perpetual priesthood demands that He still bring an offering, the sphere in which it is brought must be outside of heaven, here on earth. In the mass, either viewed as an unbloody repetition of the offering of the cross, or as a living representation of the offering of the cross,²⁾ we have the perpetuation of Christ's offering, and to the mass is therefore ascribed the character of a propitiatory sacrifice. — A more modern view held by several Roman Catholic divines is that Christ is perpetually offering His sacrifice in heaven. The offering of Christ is on this view represented as being the *obedience* of Christ. This offering He brought on the cross, it is this offering which He is continually bringing in heaven, and it is this offering which is manifested in the mass.³⁾ The mass being a propitiatory sacrifice, those who minister in the consecration of the mass can truly be called priests in a sense parallel to that of the O. T. priests.

A theory related to the one last mentioned is being advocated by a growing number of High Church men in the State Church of England.⁴⁾ As exponents of this view we can name Dr. Moberly, Canon Gore, and Canon Scott Holland. They argue that "the eucharist is a perpetuation of Christ's offering, but not of the propitiatory sacrifice which He offered on Calvary. Attention is here transferred to the sacrifice which Christ presented and continues to present in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8 : 1—3). And it is maintained that "in the eucharist the church presents an offering which is organically connected with the ceaseless offering

1) Cf. Rev. N. Dimock : *Our one Priest on High* p. I.

2) Cf. Frans Wieland : *Der Vorirenäische Opferbegriff* p. 198—200.

3) Pell in *Theol. prakt. Monatschr.* 18 Bd, II quoted by Frans Wieland.

4) The view presented in this paragraph is not however limited to High Church men but is advocated in modified form also by others, as is clear from the defense of it e. g. by W. Milligan, who is a Scottish Presbyterian.

of her Head".¹⁾ The eucharist is here represented not as a consequence of Christ's offering, but as a constituent part of it, which the church fulfills and must fulfill by virtue of its being the Body of Jesus Christ. This office it fulfills through the ministers of the gospel, who "for public and corporate purposes", to speak with Dr. Moberly²⁾ "represent and discharge the priestly functions of the whole body", and are the organs of its priestliness. The ministers who officiate at the Eucharist can be called priests in a sense not applicable to the laity.

1) Cf. the remark of W. P. Patterson on the view of Milligan in Hastings Bible Dict. Art. Sacrifice p. 347.

2) Cf. Priesthood and Sacrifice. A Report of a Conference at Oxford p. 34.

II.

WHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRIST'S HIGH PRIESTHOOD IS DISCUSSED.

In regard to the subject of the priesthood there is a marked difference between the Old Testament and the New. Whereas the former makes much of the priesthood, assigning to it a central place in religion, the latter mentions little of priests and priesthood. The reason for this difference is an obvious one. In the Old Testament, religion is dominatingly presented to us under the form of a covenant. In the New Testament the ideas of the Kingdom of God, of Christ, and the Church take their place. Religion conceived of as a covenant relation, calls for a priesthood, whereby this relation is maintained. The Kingdom of God, of Christ, and the Church bring very different ideas to the foreground, such as King, Head and members of a spiritual body, discipleship etc. Only in that book of the New Testament; namely Hebrews, where religion is again presented under the form of a covenant, can we expect and do we find the idea of the priesthood again taking a prominent place.¹⁾

This, however, does not imply that the truths for which the covenant and the priesthood stand, are not to be found elsewhere in the New Testament. It simply means that the same truths,

1) I want to acknowledge my indebtedness to my former teacher, Professor Geerhardus Vos, Ph. D., D. D., of Princeton Theological Seminary, whose eminent class lectures on "The Teachings of the Epistle to the Hebrews", and whose articles on "The Priesthood of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews". (Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 pp. 423, 579) and on "Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke". (Pr. Th. Rev. Jan. 1916) have been a very great help to me in the writing of this dissertation. For other authorities consulted cf. the notes following.

insofar as they are dealt with, are viewed from different angles. We cannot even say that the terms "covenant" and "priesthood" are absent from the other New Testament books. Occasionally also outside of Hebrews the covenant or, what more particularly interests us here, some phase of the priesthood is spoken of. Thus e.g. in the teachings of our Lord, there are passages, which suggest the thought that Christ as High Priest gave His life as a Sacrifice for His people. Cf. Matthew 20 : 28, *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν* ; Matthew 26 : 28, John 10 : 15 ; John 17 : 19. Nowhere, however, does our Lord expressly either call Himself High Priest or represent His work as a fulfilling of the office of the Old Testament high priest.¹⁾ Similarly in the writings of the Apostle Paul, Christ's death is repeatedly set forth as an offering brought to God for us. In Ephesians 5 : 2, Christ is viewed as Priest and Offering in one. He is there said to have given Himself for us "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor". In Ephesians 5 : 25, I Timothy 2 : 6, Titus 2 : 14 we are told that "Christ gave Himself in death a ransom for us," a mode of representation that calls to mind the sacrificial cultus of the Old Testament. Perhaps the most noteworthy passage in Paul's writings is I Timothy 2 : 5, 6, where the apostle tells us that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator ; i. e. High Priest, between God and man, and that this Mediator gave Himself a ransom for all. A statement regarding the work of our High Priest in heaven we find in the eighth chapter of Romans. In the thirty-fourth verse we read : "It is Christ . . . , Who also maketh intercession for us." The apostle John also speaks of the intercession of our heavenly High Priest. In I John 2 : 1 he calls Christ our "Advocate with the Father". But neither with John nor with Paul is the intercession spoken of as a *highpriestly* act. In I John 1 : 7 the statement "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" suggests the thought of the priestly sacrifice. In the Apocalypse the redeemed praise Jesus Christ for having made them kings and priests (1 : 6, 5 : 10, 20 : 6-). These statements, when viewed in the light of 1 John 3 : 2, show that also in the writings of the Apostle John the conception of Christ as Priest is not

1) Cf. Riehm p. 630.

strange. In 1 Peter 2 : 5 believers through the Lord Jesus Christ are made "an holy priesthood", and even 1 : 2 : 9 "a royal priesthood". Such statements have the priesthood of Christ for their necessary background. The above passages prove that the conception of Christ as Priest and as Priest in heaven is at least not foreign to the other New Testament writers. The passages prove also, however, since they are of the most pronounced that we find, how very little use was made of the idea of the priesthood to explain the atoning work of Christ. The thought of the priesthood, although mentioned, was permitted to remain undeveloped. It remained for the writer of Hebrews to present Christ to us as High Priest, and to show by detailed exposition how very fruitful this idea was for explaining the soteriological work of Christ.

The presentation of the Christian religion as a covenant led the author of Hebrews to speak of Christ as its High Priest. It will therefore help us to determine the author's view of the high priesthood of Christ, if we have before our minds the author's view of a covenant, and his reason for thus representing the Christian religion.

The author's chief purpose in Hebrews is to portray the excellency of the new covenant. To this end the old covenant is used as a foil. To the author the new covenant realized far better than did the old, what a covenant stood for, or, to state his view more precisely, the new covenant did realize it, the old did not. A covenant is by the author conceived of in a twofold way. In certain passages it is represented as the realization of religious ideals, the complete union of man with God.¹⁾ As such the covenant is an end in itself. Sacrifice is then a means, which leads to this end. Elsewhere and more frequently, however, it is represented as the religious institution established to attain this end. The covenant in the first sense is the ulterior end of which

1) Cf. e. g. 8 : 10, where the covenant is represented as consisting in the fact that Jehovah is a God to Israel, and Israel to Jehovah a people. A higher religious ideal than this cannot be conceived. In 3 : 6 believers are represented as being in virtue of the covenant "a household of God". In 13 : 20 the covenant is conceived of as an "everlasting covenant". As such it must be the embodiment of the ideal of religion ; i. e. union with God, since as a means to this end it cannot be eternal. Cf. G. Vos : The Priesthood of Christ in the epistle to the Hebrews, in *Pr. Th. Rev.* 1907 pp. 439—440.

the covenant in this second sense is the means. That end to which the covenant in this second sense purposes to bring, is variously designated as "salvation" "rest", inheritance", "the city which hath foundations", "a kingdom which cannot be moved" etc. Of the covenant in both these aspects the priesthood is represented as the heart. It is the priesthood, whereby the covenant, conceived of as the religious institution aiming to bring about perfect union with God, seeks to attain its end. As such an instrumentality the perfect High Priest can be called "Leader" or "Captain" (2 : 10) ; "Author" (5 : 9) ; "Forerunner" (6 : 20). But also of the covenant viewed as the ideal of religion realized, the priesthood is the centre and the determining element.¹⁾

The reason, why the author represents the Christian religion under the form of a covenant lies in the religious condition of the readers. It is not the place here to discuss, nor it is as vital a question to our purpose as at first might seem, whether these readers were Jews or Gentiles. I hold the traditional view, commonly held even today, that the readers were Jews, to be the correct one.²⁾ But be they Jews or Gentiles, the readers are at all events men, who have never had a proper "insight into the essential nature and distinctive features of the Christian religion."³⁾ The chief or sole occasion for writing "was not the need of consolation and strengthening under trial". But their lack of insight into the *spiritual* truths of Christianity. Their difficulty lay in *externalism*.⁴⁾ These readers, as Dr. Bruce has repeatedly pointed out in his commentary on Hebrews, were "in their dotage or second childhood, and needed to be fed with milk ; i.e. to be taught anew the rudiments of the Christian faith, instead of with the strong meat, which befits spiritual manhood". Chapter 5 : 11—14.⁵⁾

It is not to be wondered at that, with their externalistic view

1) Cf. 8 : 6, 12 : 24, 7 : 22, Cf. also Vos idem p. 440).

2) This traditional view, however, is since the searching criticism of it by Von Sodon, shown to be not as firmly established as it has hitherto been supposed to be.

3) Cf. Dr. Bruce : Hebrews p. 9.

4) Cf. Riehm and especially Kögel: The hidden character of Jesus as the Messiah, the Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews", quoted by Dr. G. Vos in Pr. Th Rev. 1907, p. 429.

5) Cf. Bruce : Hebrews p. 8.

of religion, the readers could not grasp the idea of the superior excellence of the New covenant above the Old. The Old Covenant, with its imposing religious ceremonies appealed much more to them. In that covenant there were religious media that could be touched, religious ceremonies that could be visualized. There was the temple with its court, its Holy Place, its Holy of Holies, resplendent with gold and silver, and further the best of what the visible world could produce. It was an ideal place, it would seem, for the Deity to dwell in. And there Jehovah did dwell in the visible token of His presence, the Shekinah. There were the priests, performing in their gorgeous robes of office. There the sacrificial cultus, which the worshipper could trace step by step and see his reconciliation worked out before his very eyes. What a contrast to all this did the Christian religion form! Christianity had none of this. To be sure, Christianity too had its Mediator. But it was not the high priest clad in precious mantle and wearing the representative breastplate, whom they could watch until he had disappeared behind the veil to do penance for them. It was rather One Who, while on earth "had neither form nor comeliness that we should desire Him", and Who now had passed from view into the heaven of unseen things. On earth Christ's humiliation prevented their handling Him, in heaven His exaltation. Their trouble was specifically a Christological one. They could not become reconciled to a suffering and dying Christ, and as little to a Christ Who had withdrawn to heaven. To them it would have been better had He stayed. And after He left, the speedy coming of Christ was the fact that soothed them for a time.

Over against these externalistic tendencies the author seeks to set forth the *spiritual* nature of Christianity. In Christianity for the first time, to the author, is realized the ideal for which the covenant stands. In whichever way the covenant be conceived of, as consisting in perfect union with God, or as the religious institution established to effect this approach, the old covenant with all its external splendor failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was enacted. It failed as religious approach to God, for under the first covenant there was no free access. That very

idea for which the covenant stood was defeated by the veil which barred the entrance to the Holy of Holies, to the throne of God above the mercy seat. "The Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest was not made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing" c.f. 9: 8. Nor did it achieve its purpose as institution leading up to this perfect union with God. It is said of the Levitical priesthood and of the law that it perfected nothing. cf. 7; 11, 19. The gifts and sacrifices could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience. cf. 9; 9.

The new covenant on the other hand realized the ideal of a covenant. In it perfect union of the covenant people with God was obtained. cf. 8; 10. In it also the object of the covenant to be an institution to establish this union was realized. Believers are now exhorted to enter in with boldness into the Holiest and to draw near in a full assurance of faith. cf. 10; 19—22. This ideal of a covenant was secured through Jesus, the Surety of that better covenant. And Christ was able to secure it exactly because of those traits that distinguished His priesthood from that of the Aaronic. Just those characteristics of Christ, which the readers in their externalism had deprecated, contributed to making Him the excellent High Priest that He was. Could they not reconcile themselves to the humiliation, suffering, and death of Christ; Chapter 2: 10 assures them that it *became*, was proper for Christ to have suffered. Had they rather seen a high priest surrounded with external glory; 2: 9 exhorts them to behold (with the spiritual eye) Jesus, crowned with honor and glory, just because of the suffering of death. Could they not feel themselves in harmony with the removal of Christ to heaven; 8: 4 tells them that if Christ were on earth He could not be a High Priest at all. Moreover such a High Priest became us, Who was made higher than the heavens 7: 26. And the fact, which forms the climatic statement of all that can be said of this High Priest is exactly, that He is such a High Priest Who is set on the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens. cf. 8: 1. Is it to these readers hard to understand how Christ could be a High Priest and not be of the house of Aaron, the writer makes it plain that already the

Old Testament knew of another and better priesthood that was to follow, as the Melchizedek episode purposes to show. And in Christ's death, naturally a stumbling-block for such as had no eye for the spiritual in religion, there was offered up a sacrifice once for all, far better than of bulls and goats ; namely, Christ's own blood, offered up through eternal spirit. cf. 9 : 14, 15. With that sacrifice the New Testament High Priest did not enter a terrestrial tabernacle to secure an atonement for the past year's sins, but the heavenly tabernacle, and obtained an eternal redemption. Again and again the external, the temporal nature of the Old Testament religion is contrasted with the spiritual nature of the New. Of everything connected with the Levitical religion the temporary nature is emphasized. Its priesthood owed its appointment to the law of a carnal commandment. cf. 7 : 16. They brought fleshly sacrifices, which at best could only sanctify to the purifying of the flesh cf. 9 : 13, 10 : 1. They officiated in an earthly tabernacle of shadows cf. 9 : 1, 24. Over against this is placed in bold relief the spiritual sphere, wherein the New Testament priesthood labors. Everything predicated of Christ's priesthood bears the stamp of the spiritual, the heavenly, the eternal. Christ Himself is a heavenly, an eternal High Priest. 8 : 4, 5 : 9. He has an indissoluble life, cf. 7 : 16. He ministers in the true ; i.e. the heavenly tabernacle. What gave undying value to His sacrifice was the eternal spirit through which it was offered. cf. 9 : 14. He obtained an eternal redemption 9 : 13. He brings His people in touch with the eternal verities. cf. 12 : 22—24. And above all He establishes an eternal covenant cf. 13 : 20. *Eternity* is predicated of whatever the New Testament High Priest is and does. And just because He is such a High Priest, His Priesthood (7 : 15, 16), and the covenant which is determined by it, (cf. 7 : 22), realize the ideal for which they stand, far transcend the ineffectual Old Testament priesthood and covenant, and Christianity becomes the *final* religion cf. 7 : 24.

III.

HEBREW'S CONCEPTION OF AN (IDEAL) HIGH PRIEST.

The above introductory statements will help us to understand what the author has to say upon the topic of the heavenly high priesthood of Christ. He calls Christ both Priest and High Priest. Not, however, as some have thought, indiscriminately. The author is very specific in the use of his terms. We would, therefore, err, if we supposed that the author did not have any distinction in mind when using these terms. An examination of the passages in which these titles appear, will show that in general the following is true: Whenever Christ is compared to the Levitical high priest, He is called High Priest. When the comparison is to the Levitical priesthood in general, then Priest. When the reference is to Psalm 110 : 4, the author calls Him Priest, applying the terminology of that Psalm. Moreover, that Psalm speaks of "priest", because it refers back to the story of Melchizedek in Genesis, where of course there could as yet be no mention of a "high priest". An apparent exception we find in 5 : 10 and 6 : 20, where Christ is spoken of as "High Priest after the order Melchizedek". In both cases, however, the context suggests the reason for the deviation from the usual order of quotation. These texts speak of Christ as He appears in the Holy of Holies, a privilege in the Levitical order only given to the high priest. Hence the substitution of the word "High Priest". If we consider that in the high priesthood we have not a different kind of office than the priesthood, but merely the culmination of what the priestly order in general stood for, and that Melchizedek likewise was the representative of the priesthood of his order, then the substitution of the title "High Priest" for "Priest" ap-

pears fully legitimate. But although both titles are given to Christ, the usual one is that of "High Priest". The reason is obvious. The part of the Old Testament ritual upon which the author chiefly dwells in his comparison of Christ and the Levitical priesthood¹⁾ is the entrance into and the work done in the Holy of Holies. This work was the peculiar function of the *high priest*. Moreover, it was the author's purpose to emphasize over against the externalism of his readers the activity of the unseen Christ in the heavenly Holy of Holies. Hence the designation of Christ as High Priest was the natural one. ²⁾

Some have contended that Christ is not conceived of in this epistle as a real High Priest. The author in his contrast of the Old and New covenants merely uses the term "priest" by way of adaptation. Insofar as the term is applied to Christ, it must be understood in the very general sense of minister, servant of the new covenant. ³⁾ This view, however, has long since been proved to be untenable.⁴⁾ Whatever our opinion may be of the author's conception of the priesthood and priestly sacrifices, this much is at least clear, that the author considers Christ to be as truly a High Priest as those of the Old Testament.

What his opinion of the business of a high priest is, the author tells us in Chapter 5 : 1 : "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins". His office is therefore of a representative character. He is appointed to represent men before God. Whatever business they have before God, he must transact. cf. 2 : 17. Wherein that business consists is explained by the exegetical statement following ; namely, *ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρα καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν*, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins."⁵⁾ A high priest must, therefore, offer. And the offerings which he must bring fall under either of two headings. They are either

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"gifts" or "sacrifices". The original for "gifts", δῶρα, when used alone, can be the Septuagint translation for $\begin{smallmatrix} \text{רָחֵם} \\ \text{וּלְרָחֵם} \end{smallmatrix}$ and as such may designate both the bloody and the unbloody offerings. θύσια, the word generally used to designate the animal sacrifices, is occasionally also used for the unbloody offerings. But when these words are used in conjunction, then θύσια points to the bloody, δῶρα to the unbloody offerings. The sacrifices in the Levitical cultus, when not in each case containing the idea of atonement for sins committed, yet always presupposed sin as the reason of their existence. In the case of the unbloody offerings matters stood differently. These did not deal directly with sin, but were gifts brought to Jehovah as tokens of gratitude, with the implied hope, that Jehovah would continue to bless the worshipper. Nevertheless, though not directly, yet indirectly the gifts also, as well as the sacrifices, had to do with sin. This is clear from the addition ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, a phrase limiting the verb and telling us why the offering of gifts and sacrifices took place. It has been contended¹⁾ that this phrase only limits the word θυσίας. In that case the work of the high priest might be understood to cover what he does "for sins" plus the bringing of gifts, which stand in no relation whatsoever to sin. Or stated differently, the "sacrifices" could be thought to refer to the soteriological, the gifts to an unsoteriological function of the high priest. That this view, however, is erroneous, is plain from the way in which the author proceeds. The very close connection between the statement "to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin", and the following participial phrase: "being able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring" indicates how the entire work of the high priest stands related to the sins of those he represents.²⁾ Furthermore, with the reading "δῶρα καὶ θυσίας", which is the more probable one,³⁾ the natural rendering is that both the gifts and the sacrifices are "for sins". To offer for sin is the important purpose for which a high priest is needed. This fact is verified by 2 : 17, where the duty of a high priest is said to be "to make

1) Thus Wescott.

2) Cf. Bleek.

3) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 442, Riggenbach : p. 123.

reconciliation for the sins of the people". The author knows of no unsoteriological priesthood. To any one who is prepared to accept that the Aaronic priesthood was only soteriological, the truth of what I am contending for must be patent. For what is here said of the function of the high priest refers not only to Christ, but in the first place to the Levitical high priest. Exactly because of the sins of the people, it was up to the high priest to bring gifts and sacrifices. The people had sinned. Therefore he had to bring sacrifices to atone for those sins. Moreover, the people as God's creatures were in duty bound to devote themselves and all they possessed to their Creator in loving service. But whereas their sins forbade their drawing near to a holy God to render Him what they as His creatures owed Him, the high priest also had to perform this duty for them.

The business of a high priest is further elucidated by the titles given to Christ in another section. In 2 : 10 Christ is called τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας. This is a designation of Christ in His high priestly capacity.¹⁾ For this title is given to Christ as the Agent whereby God "brings many sons to glory". From 2 : 10 we learn that not only is Christ the Son and does He attain to the destiny of man to be crowned with glory, but that He is also, as 2 : 9 had already indicated, the Agent, whereby God "brings many to enjoy what the Son enjoys; namely, Sonship and glory. If now, as 5 : 1 has taught us, it is the function of a high priest to transact whatever things man has with God, then the title, which designates Christ as the Agent, whereby many are made sons of God, and through Whom many receive glory from God, must be a characterization descriptive of Christ as High Priest.

The word ἀρχηγός is rendered by the Authorized Version "Captain", by the Revised Version "Author". Neither the word "Captain" nor the word "Author" suggests the full meaning, which we must attach to the word. The word "Captain" expresses the idea that the ἀρχηγός is one *who leads*. It, however, leaves unexpressed the idea, that he is at the same time *the author*, the one who brings

1) Cf. Delitzsch.

to pass the matter of which he is the leader.¹⁾ The thought, which 2 : 10 sets in the foreground, is that of *leadership*. As the One, Who is to lead us to glory, this verse tells us, Christ must first Himself undergo sufferings. But the ninth verse, where the suffering of Christ is not as in 2 : 11 ff. contemplated as a school of training for Christ, but as the instrumental cause, whereby many are brought to sonship and glory, indicates that the idea of authorship is also present. The ἀρχηγός is therefore the one who goes before to establish salvation, but then also as author brings it to pass, makes others partakers of the salvation to which he has attained. The representation of a high priest here given, therefore, thoroughly harmonizes with that of 5 : 1. There the evidently implied purpose of the offerings of the high priest is the atonement, the at-one-ment of man with God, which issues in salvation. Here that thought is definitely stated. The important distinction between the two passages however is, that in 5 : 1 we have the negative thought, that the high priest is the one who bridges the chasm made by sin, while in 2 : 10 the positive thought, that he is to be leader and author of salvation. This thought of 2 : 10, that leadership and authorship of salvation belongs to the business of a true high priest, is verified by 5 : 9 and 6 : 20. In 5 : 9 the Melchizedekian High Priest is called the αἵτιος, the Cause of eternal salvation. There the idea that Christ is *Author* of salvation is emphasized, while that of *leadership* is absent. In 6 : 20, where the Melchizedekian High Priest is designated as the Forerunner, πρόδρομος, He is portrayed as *Leader*, the One Who goes before to open the way into the Holy of Holies, while the thought of *Authorship* is absent.

It may perhaps be objected, that these passages do not teach us the author's view of the high priest in general, but only what is true of Christ as High Priest. However, if we view these state-

1) That this word can at the same time contain both ideas is plain from Acts : 3 : 15. There Peter, speaking of the resurrected Lord, says that the Jews have killed the Prince of Life, (τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς). The resurrected Lord as the first one to obtain life is there called ὁ ἀρχηγός. But the idea of authorship is as well included. For the Lord is compared to Barnabas. The latter is represented as one who caused death, a murderer. In contrast with that man, the Lord is represented as One, Who caused the very opposite of death ; i. e. life).

ments in the light of the general teaching of Hebrews, then these texts teach us not only what Christ as High Priest is, but as well what every high priest ought to be. The Levitical high priests, as well as Christ, ought to have been leaders and authors of salvation, but they were not. cf. 7 : 11, 19, 23—25. They did not answer to the ideal of what the priesthood stood for. This is the great thought, that the author is continually emphasizing is his discourse on the Aaronic priesthood.

Summing up what the above mentioned texts have to tell us of the office of the high priest, we find the following to be true : He is man's representative in the things that are to be done by God. This office of representative for man owes its rise to sin. Had sin not existed, man himself as priest could have brought his gifts in loving devotion to God. Sin, however, has made it impossible for man to fulfill this his priestly duty otherwise than through a representative. Moreover, the sins of man, whereby the union with God has been broken, call for atonement. Hence the duty of the high priest to offer sacrifices. A high priest is, therefore, to the author a soteriological necessity. The destined end of these priestly functions is to reestablish man's union with God. Or as 2 : 10 states this end, it is the bringing to σωτηρία, salvation as the condition of sonship of God and glory. Negatively the high priest must remove the obstructions between man and his God, and bridge the chasm arising through sin. And positively he must bring about the salvation of his covenant people.

Such being the function of a high priest, let us enquire what attributes the author considers necessary in a person, who is properly to perform that function. What did Christ have to be, that He might with propriety claim the dignity of a high priest ? A very first requisite, which the author is repeatedly placing in the foreground, is full oneness with those, whom he is to represent. That requisite first of all appears in the demand that he be *man*. "Every high priest" thus we read in 5 : 1 "*taken from among men* is ordained for men in things pertaining to God". His oneness with the people he is to represent, is there considered a first essential. For the priestly office emphasis is, therefore, laid on very different qualifications

than for the prophetic office. In the opening chapters of the epistle, in order to prove the excellence of Christ as Revealer, the author dwells upon the exalted nature of Christ. Christ the Prophet is superior to the angels, 1 : 4. He is not as the old Testament prophets, far removed from God, the Source of revelation. He is a far better organ of revelation than they, inasmuch as He enjoys the quality of Sonship, 1 : 1, 2, standing so closely related to God as the brightness to God's glory, and as the express image to God's Person. The truth there presented is, the nearer He is to God, the Source of all revelation, the better qualified He will be as Revealer. For the priestly office on the other hand the very opposite qualifications obtain. The nearer He is to man, the better qualified for the priesthood, He will be. To represent men, He must Himself be man. An angel can be God's revealer ; he could not be man's high priest. For it is exactly the work of a high priest to *represent* men in things pertaining to God. The correspondence in the original (5 : 1) between the phrases "from among men" and "in behalf of men" is clearly intentional and indicates how very fundamental the author considers humanity in a high priest. The phrase "ordained for men in things pertaining to God" indicates that the action of a high priest is *Godward*, not *manward*, as in the case of prophesy.

Approximately the same thought of the demand of humanity in a high priest is expressed in 2 : 14, where special application of this demand is made to the case of Christ. We there read : "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." Even Christ could not be High Priest were He not Man. He as Son had been from eternity Mediator between God and His creation.¹⁾ From the relation He sustains to the created world, therefore, we might expect that He would ipso facto be the Mediator also between sinful man and God. But this even He could not be, except by becoming Man. The necessity for His becoming Man to fulfill the office of High Priest, according to 2 : 14, lies in the fact "that through death He might destroy him that had the power

1) Cf. 1 : 2, 3.

of death, that is the devil".¹⁾ The possibility of dying demanded that He become Man. The high priestly office demanded of an ideal high priest that he die and therefore Christ, to be High Priest, must be Man. The reason for the need of humanity as well as for other requirements, as given in 2:17, is a different one from that of 2:14; i.e. "that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of His people". He could not be the merciful High Priest that would be faithful to man's interests, were he not one with that humanity. For the same breach, that existed between sinful man and God, also existed between sinful man and the exalted Son. Only by becoming one with that humanity could this breach be overlapped and the Son act for man in the capacity of High Priest. In 5:1, where the necessity of humanity was also pointed out, the reason was a different one ; i.e. the need of humanity in one who is to *represent* man.²⁾

This oneness between the high priest and the people whom he is to represent, however, must consist in more than mere humanity. There must as well be oneness as regards covenant standing. That this was the case with the Levitical high priest is throughout the epistle presupposed, although nowhere expressly stated.³⁾ But the author expressly points this out in the case of Christ. He tells us in 2:11: "For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren". With this statement the writer does not have in mind the oneness of the Sanctifier and the sanctified with reference to *Adam*. That oneness is first indicated in 2:14. But he has reference to the spiritual unity which they form. They are one with reference to *God*. Those here considered one with Christ are spiritually His brethren. In this sense we are to understand the term "brethren" in the quotation from Psalm 22:23. Brethren they are since they all are such as put their trust, their faith in God. Isaiah

1) Cf. further on this text pp. 112 f.

2) Cf. further on 2:17 p. 54.

3) Cf. chapter 7:11-22, where the disanulling of the priesthood, the law, and covenant go together.

8 : 17. Especially is this covenant unity clear from the quotation, from Isaiah 8 : 18 : "Behold I and the children which God hath given me". The prophet Isaiah there occupies a typical position in a great crisis of Israel's history. The prophet and his children were at the time a sign to Israel. They represented the remnant that was being formed by Isaiah's preaching, the true spiritual Israel in the midst of the general apostasy. The prophet in this position is a type, so the author assures us, of the High Priest of the New Testament, Who can count as His children the church of God for which He ministers.

The unity of Christ and His people is carried a step farther in 2 : 17, where it is said that "in all things" it behoved Him to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of His people". This does not imply any special reference to Christ's humanity or covenant standing. Of these the preceding verses had already spoken. But here the oneness, the similarity in circumstances of life is emphasized. The high priest must have similar experiences as His people, sin of course excepted, if He is to be the High Priest that is needed. Under this "in all things" we must, therefore, understand especially¹⁾ such experiences as sufferings, temptations, struggles, dangers, and troubles, even to the point of undergoing death. These alone as a school of training could fit Christ to become the High Priest, Who in the mercy and faithfulness which He revealed to His people, would prove to be the High Priest that was needed. Only a high priest, who had passed through similar experiences, would have the much-needed sympathy that would arouse him to plead for them and to make reconciliation for their sins.

This carries us on to the consideration of another quality demanded ; i.e. that of compassion for those whom he represents. A compassionate high priest is the only one that can supply the need, because of the nature of those, whom he is to represent. For according to 5 : 2 these are "ignorant and erring ones". Those for whom high

1) Cf. Delitzsch.

priestly intercession must be made are not holy persons, but sinners, such as are continually transgressing God's law. In the Old Covenant, sins committed "with a high hand"; i.e. such sins, which the transgressor, though he was aware that they were contrary to the law, nevertheless deliberately did, with disregard for what the law commanded, such sins could *for political reasons*, not be atoned for by the sacrifices of the law. All sins, however, not committed with a high hand, even those done in conscious transgression of the law, but where the sinner was overpowered by his lusts, contrary to his better nature, for those there was atonement through the Levitical sacrifices.¹⁾ With this in mind, we can better understand why Hebrews speaks of "ignorant and erring ones". By these terms the writer characterizes all the sinners, the one class mentioned above excepted, for whom a high priest had to officiate. "Ignorant" they were, insofar as they had not wantonly transgressed God's law; "erring ones" they were, because in their many temptations they had drifted away from the commandments. The writer does not in the least attempt to give an apology for sin. But he pictures sin here from the point of view, which a faithful high priest would take of the matter. Sin itself, the high priest would feel, was an offense that permitted of no condoning. But he could understand how perfectly natural it was in ignorant and erring people. With their sinful infirmities it was to be understood that they were continually falling into sin, the temptations proving too powerful for the weakness of their natures.²⁾

What these people therefore needed, was a high priest who could understand their troubles, who could have compassion on them in their failings. It must be one, who, knowing under what difficulties they labored, would have a feeling for them, when they came to ask his help. A high priest was officially a holy person. He was separated from the world of sinners, and consecrated to

1) Cf. Delitzsch.

2) Unlike the use of the word ἀσθενεία in 4:15, where it must be understood of Christ, here the sinful connotation must be included. With Christ however the natural weaknesses found an antidote in His unswerving holiness. 4:15, 7:28.

to Jehovah's service. Dead he must be to the world. He might not even bemoan the death of his nearest relatives. Sacred oil anointed him, with sacred robes he was clad. His very garment told what he was : Holiness to the Lord.¹⁾ In the temple was his place. There he was serving God in the beauty of holiness, that enshrined that sacred dwelling. Could a sinful worshipper expect such an one to intercede ? Much rather might he expect the high priest to be indignant at his not having kept God's law. Holiness itself reacts against sin, and cannot exist together with it in harmony.

And yet, of what primal importance was it not that the high priest be compassionate, that there be something in him that could respond to the appeal of that sinful worshipper, so that he be moved to help him. For to the high priest the sinful man had come to have him offer gifts and sacrifices for his sins. If then the high priest were one that could not be touched with a feeling of the worshipper's infirmities, what need to go to him ? The word used in the original to designate the quality of compassion *μετριοπαθεῖν* is neatly chosen. This word indicates a moderate emotion. It is a word that occupies middle ground. It lies between excessive emotion on the one hand, and Stoical apathy on the other. Were the high priest a man with emotions running to excess, how easily would he not be provoked to anger or disgust at the ignorance and erring of those, for whom he was to officiate. Likewise, however, if he were a man lacking all emotion, he would again be disqualified. For then sin and holiness, righteousness and unrighteousness, would be viewed with the same equanimity. A moderate emotion he must have. This will lead him to exercise patience with his sinful people, to bear with them in their failings, through never condoning the sins they had committed.²⁾

This sort of feeling was possible with the Levitical high priest, whereas he himself was troubled (5 : 3) by the same sort of weaknesses that beset his people. Officially he was indeed a holy person, separated even from the taint of sin. But in practise he was quite a different man. Then he too had to battle with his own infirmities.

1) W. Milligan p. 68.

2) Cf. Bleek, Lünemann, Delitzsch.

His own experiences would tell him how very difficult it was not to transgress, when temptations attacked his own weak nature. And the Levitical code gave no occasion to look with haughty pride upon the failings of others, since it required that he make a sacrifice as well for his own as for his people's sins.

Does the model high priest of the Levitical order know how to conduct himself towards his erring people, no less is this true of the New Testament High Priest. Those for whom this High Priest must officiate, are likewise beset with weaknesses. Cf. 4 : 15. They too have therefore the need of a High Priest, Who is able to μετριοπαθεῖν, to bear gently with the weak and erring, while on the other hand not excusing their sins. At first sight it would seem impossible for Christ to have this feeling of compassion for the sinner. The Old Testament high priest could have this feeling, because he was himself a sinner, begirt with weaknesses. But how could any μετριοπαθεῖν, however welcome to the sinner, be expected in Christ, Who, as the author expressly tells us, was without sin ? (cf. 4 : 15, 7 : 28). On the contrary, would we not expect a holy High Priest as He to rise up in holy anger against all that was sinful ? Hebrews, however, assures us that the capability for μετριοπαθεῖν is as present in Him as in the Old Testament high priest. 'T is true, the feeling for sinners could not in the case of Christ arise from a consideration of own personal sins. Nevertheless, the same ἀσθένεια, the weaknesses of human nature, which with the Levitical high priest were repeatedly issuing in sinful acts, that same weakness was present in Christ. With Him, however, it never issued in sin. But what it did do was to produce an earnest struggle, when temptations came His way. He had a weak frail nature, that was averse to suffering. And His duty as High Priest called Him to suffer continually while on earth. Christ, therefore, had to overcome this natural aversion to suffering, in order to be loyal to His high priestly calling and remain unspotted. Though He never yielded to the temptations, He knew from His own experience, even better than they, what a difficulty it is amidst the natural weaknesses to give steadfast resistance to temptations. For not he who has yielded to temptations, has tasted its

most bitter fruit, but he who remains steadfast. The author does not expressly say that Christ can μετριοπαθεῖν, but he shows that this quality is present also in Him, by pointing to the ground for such a sentiment; namely, the struggle human weakness had also produced in the life of Christ. 5 : 7 8. He selects from the many examples which life of Christ might suggest, one of the most severe, the struggle which Christ had with temptation in the garden of Gethsemane, just before His death. He describes that scene as follows : "Who in the days of His flesh . . . had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death . . .". 7 : 7, 8. One who has passed through such experiences, knows what trials His people are subject to, when temptations beset them. Such a High Priest is of a surety able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring people.

But not only can Christ, as well as the Levitical high priest, have μετριοπαθεῖν, He can do what they can not do ; namely, have real συμπάθεια. cf. 4 : 15. The relation, which these words sustain one to another, we may represent in this manner : The former indicates a moderate feeling, that enables to judge calmly and gently about the weaknesses of others. The latter describes a sentiment which enters into the trials and sufferings of others, and makes them one's own. One who has συμπάθεια in his heart suffers along with the one for whom he has sympathy. The Levitical high priest could bear gently with the ignorant and erring, could make allowance for their sins. But Christ can do more. According to 4 : 15, He can have sympathy with these ignorant and erring ones. That "we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities", does not imply that even an exemplary Old Testament high priest was devoid of all sympathy. For in that text no such contrast is intended.¹⁾ But what was such sympathy as a sinful high priest could have, compared with the thoroughgoing sympathy of our holy High Priest? The very sinful limitations, which made a gentle feeling toward other sinners possible, would prevent his entering into the trials

1) Cf. e. g. Lünemann, Delitzsch.

of his people with any depth of feeling. But Christ the Holy One knows no such restraint. And He has a life of experiences behind Him, which has acquainted Him with all our struggles in the battle with sin. For "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin". 4 : 15. The depth of that statement is not for us to sound. But this much it clearly tells us : We have One, Who can have a thoroughgoing sympathy, because He has a thoroughgoing likeness of experiences, while He is a thoroughly sinless High Priest (cf. 2 : 17). What influence such sympathy will have on His high priestly activity, the author lets us see in 4 : 16 : "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace", he there tells us, "that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". A high priest that can place Himself in our condition and live through our weaknesses with us, will ardently espouse our cause in His high priestly work before God's throne.

Thus far we have considered what are the necessary qualifications of every high priest in his relation to man. We now come to the discussion of the qualities necessary as regards *his relation to God*. Even if anyone had the same covenant standing, the same sort of experiences, and were full of sympathy, that would not yet qualify him to be high priest. Without these qualifications, it is true, he could not be high priest, but with these alone no less. He must be *appointed by God* to the high priesthood before he is qualified to act in that capacity. This thought is implied in 7 : 28, where we read that "the law maketh men high priests having infirmities". The Levitical high priest, we are there told, was not a self-appointed functionary, nor did he owe his appointment to any human authority, but to the God-given law. In 5 : 4—6 this idea receives special treatment. "And no man" we there read "taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." It is an honor to be allowed to stand as man's representative before God to perform man's business there. An honor of a high order it would already be to be a people's representative at the court of an earthly ruler. How much more does the high priest occupy a place of honor, since he is his people's representative at the throne of God in heaven. This honor cannot be

self-assumed. It is the business of those in authority to appoint that representative. In an absolute monarchy this duty would devolve upon the king. Thus in the absolute monarchy of God over His creatures, man's representative is God-appointed. This fact becomes the more clear, when we consider that man's high priestly representative is appointed, according to Hebrews, *because of sin*. Sin has barred the entrance to the throne of God for every man. No man, therefore, himself sinful, as all men are, can aspire to that place of eminence and undertake to represent other sinful men before God. Were he to attempt it, his action would be punishable. And even if he were sinless, as Christ was, even then a sinless man could not draw nigh to God in the name of others and for their benefit. This would be infringing on the majestic rights of God, Whose prerogative it is to designate the one, who is to be clothed with the dignity of being man's high priestly representative before the throne of heaven.¹⁾

As a proof of the necessity of divine appointment he cites the case of Aaron, in whose appointment the right of the Levitical high priesthood is grounded. "Aaron did not glorify himself to become high priest." No man imbued with a feeling of what the high priesthood demanded of him would aspire to such an office. A realization of the tremendous responsibility of being man's representative before God, coupled with a feeling of one's own infirmity, would make him shrink from rather than covet such an office. How much do not the responsibility attached to the ministry of the gospel make godly men shrink from entering upon that ministry. Much greater the reason for reluctance in the case of the singular position of high priest.²⁾

This same natural reluctance which would characterize every wellminded high priest, also characterized Christ. With Him there was no haughty ambition to usurp that office. "Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest." Quite the contrary! As 5 : 7, 8 tell us, His human nature shrank from assuming

1) Cf. Riehm p. 435.

2) Cf. Bruce : Hebrews.

the responsibility to which the high priesthood called Him. In order to be loyal to His calling He, by a great struggle, had to overcome the reluctance of His weak human nature. And no wonder! For the high priesthood in His case involved the duty of undergoing death for His people. A vain man, who little felt what the office demanded of him, might cherish ambition for the office of the Aaronic high priest. There were many such ambitious seekers of that office in the later degenerate period of Israel's history. But none of these would have coveted Christ's position. For He was to be not only High Priest, but Sacrifice as well. We would not expect any of them to want to become a sacrifice. Even one not driven by haughty ambition would shrink from so great a responsibility to which duty called, and only assume that to which his nature disinclined after a struggle, and then not from a spirit of ambition, but out of consideration of loyalty to his office. He would pray as Christ has prayed: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not My will, but thine be done."^{1,2)} The scene in the garden of Gethsemane (5 : 7) reveals how strongly the ἀσθένεια in Christ reacted against the suffering of death, which He was about to undergo. To speak with Delitzsch, this scene pictures us Christ as "hinabgesunken in eine Leidentiefe, welche zugleich tiefste Verdunkelung Seines Gottmenschlichen Bewusstseins und äusserstes Ueberwältigtsein von menschlicher ἀσθένεια ist."³⁾ The ἀσθένεια in Christ shrank from the passion and death which was to come, and provoked the expression upon His lips: "Abba Father, all things are possible unto Thee, take away this cup from Me."⁴⁾ No spirit of ambition can be distilled out of these words. What spurred Him on in that awful hour, was quite a different consideration. It was His εὐλάβεια, His godly fear, (5 : 7)⁵⁾, which found expression in His unswerving desire to submit His will completely to that of His

1) Luke 22 : 42.

2) Cf. Bruce.

3) Cf. Delitzsch in loc.

4) Mark 14 : 36.

5) Bleek, Lünemann, Delitzsch, Wescott.

Father. By it He conquered over the weakness of His flesh. Because of it also His prayer was heard.¹⁾ He "offered up prayers and supplications" to God, "Who was able to save Him out of death." The answer, which His prayer received, was not alone the strengthening of the angel,²⁾ taking away the fear of death, but as our author tells us, He was saved *out of* death ἐκ θανάτου, in other words, he was raised from the dead and glorified.³⁾

As proof that Christ did not become High Priest through personal ambition, but by divine appointment, two Old Testament passages are cited. Christ was appointed by the One, Who said unto Him : "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. As He saith in another place : Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." In the first of these quotations the author, when speaking of Christ as Son, does not have in mind directly His divine, metaphysical Sonship. Divine Sonship in itself would not yet, according to the author, involve the high priesthood. Sonship and high priesthood are always kept distinct by the author. But he refers here to the inherited Messianic Sonship of Christ. The quotation is from Psalm 2 : 7. We have there a description of David as type of the Christ. David, after a period of struggle, was anointed king over Sion. When he was raised to the office of theocratic king over Israel, he was, according to Psalm Two, recognized by God as His Son. This statement of David the type, is by Hebrews referred to Christ. But in the light of what Psalm Two tells us, the quotation in Hebrews cannot refer directly to Christ's eternal Sonship,⁴⁾ but of Christ at the resurrection and subsequent exaltation. He then was acknowledged by God as His Son, and placed upon the throne of heaven as Ruler over Sion. The quotation in its typical aspect, therefore, refers to the Sonship of the Messianic King. What the author is here contending for is the congruity of the fact, that the Same One, Who by God was appointed to the office of Messianic King, be also the destined

1) Cf. Delitzsch p. 193.

2) Cf. Luke 22 : 43.

3) Cf. Delitzsch.

4) Thus Lünemann, Bleek.

High Priest. These offices he considers inseparable. If He has been destined to become King, then also High Priest. His right to the conclusion is clear from the following quotation. "Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." For the Melchizedek Priest is King-Priest. Christ the Melchizedek High Priest is to be the fulfillment of both David's and Aaron's offices.

From 5 : 5—6 we therefore learn, that a special divine appointment was necessary for Christ, were He to be eligible to the high priesthood. We might perhaps have expected, that in Christ's divine Sonship lay the right to the high priesthood, without a special appointment. The divine Son is as such Mediator between God and the created world, (cf. 1 : 2, 3) ; does not the same hold true for the relation between God and the redemptive world ? Here, however, we see that from a special appointment by God the author deduces the right of Christ to the high priesthood. The reason for this is, because the high priesthood is to Hebrews a new office, distinct from the Sonship, and called into being because of sin. Hebrews knows of no unsoteriological priesthood. And to this new office Christ has received His right by divine appointment. As the Son of God, even as faultless man, He had the right for Himself of free approach to God. But the right to represent sinful humanity before God is a divine prerogative, and had to be given, even to the Son, by divine appointment. A special decree of God's council, as these verses indicate, is the ground of Christ's claim to the high priesthood. This same truth, that Christ needed to be appointed to this office, is verified by Hebrews 3 : 2, where it is said of Christ, that He was faithful to Him that appointed Him", and by Hebrews 7 : 28, where in contra t to the law-made high priests Christ is said to have been made High Priest by the word of the oath.

This, however, does not imply that the eternal Sonship and the high priesthood have inherently nothing in common. The fact is, that in Hebrews there is a very close relation shown to exist between the two. Though Christ could not lay claim to the high priesthood merely on the basis of His divine Sonship, yet on the other hand He could not be the ideal High Priest without

being the Son. Not a few passages imply the thought, either of the fitness of the Son's being High Priest, or of one or other qualification, which divine Sonship gave to His high priesthood, or that the duties of a high priest demanded that the high priest be divine.¹⁾ In chapter 5 : 5 just considered, the congruity is pointed out between the Sonship and the high priesthood. It is true, the Sonship in Messianic sense is here spoken of, and that is said to underlie the priesthood. Notwithstanding, whereas to Hebrews the Messianic Sonship has the divine Sonship for its necessary background²⁾ the implication is that Divine Sonship and the High Priesthood are very closely connected. In 4 : 14 Hebrews calls Christ a great High Priest, because He is the Son of God. The exalted nature of His Person as Son and the unique relation, which He sustains to God, is there said to qualify Him eminently for the high priesthood. His Deity is considered to be of so much importance, that His ministry can there be summed up in His Sonship. In Chapter 3 : 1—6 Christ the Apostle and High Priest is compared to Moses. Moses was faithful as servant *in* the house of God ; Christ as Son *over* the house of God. A servant can be faithful, but for a Son it is natural to be faithful over His own house. An interesting passage is found in 1 : 2, 3. There the author has undertaken to describe the greatness of the Son of God, owing to His unique nature. He has become "Heir of all things". He it is "by Whom God made the world." He is "the Brightness of God's glory and the express Image of His Person." He "upholds all things by the word of His power." Being all these things, the author says He made purification of our sins." There the unique greatness of the Son is laid at the basis of Christ's work. The divine Son, for no other name has as yet been given to Christ — is represented as having performed the high priestly function of making purification of sins. This seems to warrant the conclusion that the Son, Who has just been described as the Mediator between God and the created world,

1) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. Oct. 1907. Kögel p. 64, 66. Davidson : Note on the Son in his commentary on Hebrews pp. 78, 79.

2) Cf. Kögel : Der Sohn und die Söhne, eine exegetische Studie zu Hebr. 2 : 5—18. (Beiträge zur Förderung Chr. Theologie VIII 536).

was the natural Person to become the Mediator between God and the redemptive world. It was natural that the divine Son should be appointed to this office. In 7 : 28 the need is indicated of the high priest's being divine in order to enable him to render the perfect obedience that was necessary. The law appoints *men* to the high priesthood. The word of the oath appoints on the contrary One Who has the quality of *Sonship*. Of the "men" it is said that they have sinful infirmities. The Son, however, instead of having these infirmities, which would render Him unfit to be an effectual High Priest, has a perfected obedience. It was His *Sonship* that enabled Him to bring that perfect obedience. cf. 5 : 8, 9. How indispensable Deity is for the sacrifice Christ had to bring, is also evident from chapter 9 : 14.¹⁾ There the effectual redemption, whereby the conscience is cleansed from dead works to serve the living God is attributed to the fact that Christ offered Himself "*through eternal spirit*". By this eternal spirit is meant the divine spirit of the Son of God, in other words, His Deity. This divine spirit it was that gave eternal validity to His sacrifice.

1) For a detailed exposition of this passage cf. chapter VIII.

IV.

CHRIST, THE IDEAL HIGH PRIEST, A HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.

Thus far we have traced what attributes Hebrews considers necessary in an ideal high priest, some of which, as we have seen, Christ had in common with the Aaronic high priests, some of which were lacking in those high priests and found in Christ alone. If now we sum up in a word those qualities, which both make Christ the ideal High Priest and distinguish Him from the Aaronic order, it would be that He is High Priest *after the order of Melchizedek* (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ). In ascribing the order (τάξις) of Melchizedek to Christ, Hebrews does not mean to indicate that Christ is of the rank of Melchizedek, just as e. g. in the Episcopal church we have the order of deacon, priest, and bishop. Nor does Hebrews use the word in the same sense as we, when we speak of religious orders or fraternities, to indicate that Christ was of that "order". An examination of chapter 7: 15, where ὁμοιότητα is substituted for τάξις, and of 7: 11, where the "order" of Melchizedek is placed over against the "order" of Aaron, reveals that to Hebrews "after the order of" amounts to "after the manner of." That which distinguishes Christ from the order of Aaron is that He is the same sort of a High Priest, that Melchizedek was¹⁾.

Whence did the author derive his inspiration to liken Christ to Melchizedek? Not to be sure from Philo.²⁾ The Old Testament led to the thought that He was High Priest after the order of

1) Cf. Delitzsch Riegenbach.

2) Cf. G. Vos in Pr. Th. Rev. July 1907 p. 425.

Melchizedek. It was the inspired author of Psalm 110, whom the author of Hebrews follows, when pointing out the Melchizedek nature of Christ's priesthood. That inspired Psalmist had already foretold, that the Melchizedek of the Genesis narrative was the foreshadowing of Christ as High Priest. From the story of Melchizedek in Genesis, which lies back of the statements of Hebrews and of Psalm 110, we learn whatever is known to us of the Old Testament type of Christ. The story of him in Genesis is a simple one and brief. Abraham has achieved a crushing victory over Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him. On his return he is met by Melchizedek. The whole transaction of this man with Abraham is then summed up in these few statements :¹⁾ "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said : Blessed be Abram of the most high God, Possessor of heaven and earth ; and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." The important thing to notice is the brevity of the record. Nothing is told us, either here or elsewhere, of his previous or subsequent history. We know nothing of his birth, or of other incidents of his life, or of his death, As a picture in a diorama, so the picture given us of Melchizedek in Genesis comes from the unseen, fills the eye for a moment, only to pass away again into the region of the unseen. Had his birth or death been recorded, neither Psalm 110 nor Hebrews could have argued as it does. It is the Melchizedek of the Genesis record, not the historical person lying back of it, that is a type of Christ as High Priest.²⁾

1) Cf. Genesis 14 : 1, 18—20).

2) I do not deem it necessary to enter into a discussion of the various theories, often fantastic, that have been held regarding the person of Melchizedek. The statements in Genesis that he was without father and without mother and without genealogy, as well as his abrupt appearance, gave rise to various opinions, which represented Melchizedek as having been a supernatural being. Thus according to Jerome, Origen and Didimus held him to be an angel. Later writers of the Jewish Cabala identified him with the angel Michael. Some orthodox Christians supposed Melchizedek to be an incarnation or simply a Christophany of the Son of God. Hierax, an Egyptian ascetic, was of the opinion that Melchizedek was an incarnation of the Holy Ghost. The sect of the Melchizedekians taught that he was a being greater than Christ, whereas Christ was after his order.

As such it forms the occasion for the inspired statement in Psalm 110, What circumstance may have prompted David to compose this Psalm is uncertain. It may very well have been, though the historical proof is lacking, that David unearthed in Jerusalem, the Salem of the King-Priest Melchizedek¹⁾ ancient documents, which made mention of its former ruler. However that may be, the Messiah — for the Psalm is directly and exclusively Messianic — is in this Psalm foretold to be a King-Priest just as Melchizedek was. The Psalm opens with the session in glory of the exalted Messianic King. This King, thus the psalmist tells us, shall go forth "conquering and to conquer" till all enemies are made his footstool. In the midst of the description of the victorious course of this Conqueror, abruptly this sentence is interposed: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." This King in glory would, therefore, also be a Priest. The crown He would wear, but also the mitre. King-
 ✓ ship and priesthood united in one Messiah! A Priest upon His throne would this Messiah be. And the priesthood, how strange a one it would be! Not that of the familiar and revered type of the

The duty of Christ was to give men a true knowledge of this higher Mediator, the high priest Melchizedek, through whom all offerings were to be brought to God. According to "the Book of Adam", to Melchizedek and Shem was given the charge to carry the body of Adam to Calvary, the place where the Incarnate Word was to suffer, in order that of His blood might fall upon the skull of Adam. At Golgotha Melchizedek built an altar of twelve stones, typical of the twelve apostles, and there offered bread and wine as a symbol of the future sacrifice of Christ. At the hill of Golgotha Melchizedek continued to serve God with prayer and fasting, and when Abraham came near that place, Melchizedek gave him the symbolical eucharist. An opinion current among the Jews according to Jerome was that he was to be identified with Shem, who, it was pointed out, could still live in the time of Abraham. And to close the list of suppositions, Philo, according to Wescott, represents Melchizedek as "the power of rational persuasion, which offers to the soul food of gladness and joy, and in a sense answers to the priestly Logos." These theories are no longer held, and need not hence be discussed here. See for the statements contained on this note: A. Kuyper: *Dictaten Dogmatiek*; *Loc. De Chr: (Pars Tertia)* p. 90 f. B. F. Wescott: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*; Note on 7: 1. Rigenbach: *Der Brief an die Hebraer 1913* Note on Introduction to Chapter Seven p. 176 f. For literature on the high priest Melchizedek cf. Rigenbach p. 176, Hastings Bible Dictionary Art. Melchizedek, and P. R. E. Art. Melchizedek.

1) On the various theories as to the locality of the Salem of Genesis cf. P. R. E. IX 525 ff. Rigenbach on 7: 1.

line of Aaron, which was at best a priesthood of time and like everything of time subject to decay. But it would be a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, an eternity priesthood, a priesthood forever. Moreover, a priesthood performed not in an earthly sanctuary, but in a heavenly, a priesthood belonging to the heavenly, eternal sphere, for it is performed by Him, Who sitteth at the right hand of God. The exalted position of the Messiah is here described in His kingly power and glorious intercession from the moment, that these two begin to intertwine. In Israel the kingdom and priesthood were separated. David realizes the imperfection of this. He feels that he as king could not secure the atonement for his people. The priest, the reconciler of his people, on the other hand, lacked the power to govern them and free them from their enemies. Deeply moved by this imperfection, David with his prophetic vision looks forward to the time of perfection, when the Messiah, the King-Priest, will unite these two offices in one, and then be perfect King as well as perfect Priest.

Still another Old Testament passage proclaims the same truth of the royal priesthood of the New Testament High Priest of Melchizedek's order. Zechariah 6 : 9—15. The name of Melchizedek is not mentioned, yet the unity of the priesthood and the kingship of the High Priest, Who was to be after the order of Melchizedek is forcefully described. The Jews on their return from Babylon had begun to rebuild the temple. The opposition of their enemies and their own supineness and irreligion led them to abandon the work for a time. Under Serrubbabel, the governor, and under Joshua, the high priest, the work had been resumed, and was encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. News that the building of the temple had been resumed, was soon brought to the Jews that had remained behind in Babylon. These sent a deputation to Jerusalem with gifts for the temple. Zechariah is thereupon directed by God to take of the gold and of the silver, which these men had brought, and wreath it into crowns, perhaps intertwined so as to form one whole, and to place them upon the head of Joshua, the high priest. These crowns, the golden symbolizing the royal splendor, and the silver the priestly purity, when placed

upon the head of the high priest, should symbolize that in the future royal rule was to be added to the high priesthood. It might seem in those despondent days following upon the captivity, that the pristine glory of which the priesthood was now deprived, was forever a thing of the past. Here, however, the prophet foretells that the glory of the priesthood of this latter house would be far greater than of the former. Not in Joshua himself, however, was this prophesy to receive its fulfillment. The crowns placed upon his head by divine appointment, were by the same divine command again removed, and placed in the temple as a memorial that the offering of the Babylonian Jews had been graciously accepted, and as an earnest of the time, when others afar off, not only Jews, but Gentiles as well, would come and build in the temple of the Lord. 6 : 15. In Joshua himself the prophesy could not be fulfilled, since he had no royal dignity, but in the One Whom he typified. "Behold the Man Whose name is The Branch ; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord, Even He shall build the temple of the Lord ; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne ; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne ; and the council of peace shall be between them both." As in psalm 110 : 4, so here, the royal and sacerdotal offices shall be united in the one Person of the Messiah.

✓ The chasm between kingship and priesthood was to be bridged in this High Priest-King. All dualism, all disharmony will then be a thing of the past. He that as High Priest atones by His offering for the sins of His people, has the power as King to break the force of sin in His people's hearts. Indeed the council of peace will be between them both ! That to be sure is the guarantee of the effective working of this High Priest, the guarantee moreover that He need not be superseded because of unprofitableness by another order, but can lay claim to being a High Priest that is to abide forever.

✓ What now is the representation which Hebrews gives of the Melchizedek order of Christ's priesthood ? We shall be the better able to understand why and in what sense our Lord is pictured in chapter VII as a High Priest of the order of Melchizedek, if we can have in mind the apologetic aim of the writer. Hebrews

is an apology for Christianity. The author in this book is battling against the externalism of his readers. To them the visible ceremonies of the old covenant appealed more strongly than the spiritual truths of the Christian religion. Especially was this true of the august priesthood, the very centre of the Old Testament religion. How could it be claimed of Christ that He superseded this divinely instituted priesthood of Aaron? This objection to the priesthood of Christ, the author meets by the introduction of Melchizedek. It might seem that Christ, to be a legitimate High Priest indeed, must be Son of Aaron. The author however points out that the Levitical order is not the only legitimate order of priesthood of which the Old Testament knew. Also the inspired author of Ps. 110 had spoken of a priesthood of a different order. That Psalm, as the readers themselves would acknowledge, was Messianic. Here then was a priesthood, one after the order of Melchizedek, to which the Messiah might justly lay claim. This priesthood further could not be characterized as an upstart, inferior in kind to the Aaronic. For, it was earlier than the latter, existing already in the time of Abraham, when the Levitical priesthood had not yet been called into being. Nor had the Aaronic order in any way supplanted it, so that the Melchizedek priesthood, as a rude antiquated form of priesthood, had been abolished. Quite the contrary! The very fact that the oracle in Psalm 110 foretold that another priesthood after Melchizedek's order, was destined to follow upon that of Aaron, as a priesthood of a higher order as witnessed by the oath-swearing, that fact marked the Aaronic priesthood as the provisional one, and the Melchizedek as the abiding. It is very true, thus he seems to say to his readers in chapter VII, that Christ was not of Aaron's order, but that is just to His advantage. Perfection could not come by the Levitical priesthood, hence the need that another Priest should arise after Melchizedek's order (7 : 11), in order to bring about this needed perfection. The Aaronic priesthood, so Psalm 110 foretold, was destined to be annulled, and for this weak and unprofitable priesthood was to be substituted the far better, the perfect priesthood of the Messiah, Who was to be after Melchizedek's order.

Closely allied to the apologetic argument, in fact forming a part of it, is what has been termed the dogmatical argument.¹⁾ As such the introduction of the Melchizedek episode serves to make plain the eternal efficacy of Christ's priesthood in contrast to the unprofitableness of the Levitical priesthood. *Eternity* in a word is the distinguishing feature, whereby Melchizedek's priesthood, according to chapter Seven, becomes a type of that of Christ. This does not imply that eternity is the only typical attribute in the priest Melchizedek. But the other typical attributes mentioned ; e. g. royalty, righteousness, peace, are, as we shall presently see, made subservient to this one eternity attribute which is emphasized throughout the chapter. In reality they are implied in it. Melchizedek's and Christ's priesthood is not pictured merely as one that is eternal, but as one, the intrinsic nature of which is such, that eternity is a necessary result. The comparison between the Levitical and Melchizedek priesthoods in this chapter, from a dogmatic point of view, has reference to the *efficaciousness, the eternal value* of the work of the Melchizedekian High Priest as compared to the inefficacy of those of the Aaronic order.

Having now from a survey of the chapter as a whole learned the aim of the author, let us examine this notable chapter in detail. The first ten verses tell us, on the basis of Genesis XIV, what the order of Melchizedek is. The remainder of the chapter, on the basis of Psalm 110 : 4, gives us a description of Christ, the High Priest after that order. 7 : 1—10 again has two distinct parts. 7 : 1—3 deal with the personal eminence of the high priest Melchizedek. 7 : 4—10 deal with His priestly superiority over the Levitical order represented by Abraham. At the opening of this chapter, in a well-packed sentence, the author sums up all the facts about Melchizedek, which he considers to be of typical significance. He first of all enumerates the simple facts as recorded in Genesis, mentioning only whatever he considers relevant to his purpose. The facts themselves are simple enough and need not detain us, since their

1) Bruce : Hebrews 243.

typical significance, which interests us here, is in the following discussion, insofar as the author of Hebrews deems it necessary, expressly pointed out. The very name Melchizedek מֶלְכִּי־צֶדֶק and the city, where he ruled שֶׁלֶם are adjudged by the writer to be typical and are therefore interpreted. "King of righteousness", as such Melchizedek was personally known. He is a king, as both these epithets reveal, one whose kingship is characterized by righteousness and peace. He is a king who exercises righteousness and whose reign results in the establishment of righteousness.¹⁾ Further, he is a king whose reign is distinguished by peace, one who rules in a realm where passion and strife are absent. These characteristics are not of such a nature, that they could as suitably have been omitted without damaging the argument. It is true, the royal attributes of Melchizedek here spoken of are only cited in a cursory manner. They are not taken up and applied to Christ as is the case with those mentioned in the following verse. The author does later on (e. g. 8 : 1) make mention of Christ's kingship. He does not, however, ground his statement there on the typical kingship here spoken of. However, the very fact that the author deems it necessary to interpret these names, proves that to him they are a necessary part of the picture of Melchizedek as a type of Christ. He would not have needed to remind his readers of the meaning of those wellknown Hebrew words, if they had not had a typical signification. And they must not merely be understood as typical of Christ as King, but must have reference to Him as Priest, for it is the Priest after the order of Melchizedek of whom the author in chapter Seven is giving a description. It must be, therefore, that the High Priest, Who is to be after the order of Melchizedek, must at the same time be King, a King of righteousness and peace as Melchizedek was. (Cf. 8 : 1). These attributes royalty, righteousness, and peace, form necessary contributions of the Melchizedekian or ideal High Priest. The ideal high priest must not be helpless, nay, must have royal power, power as king

1) Cf. Delitsch. Riehm.

to keep his people by the blessings, which as high priest he has secured for them. The eternal priesthood must be righteous. If not, it would at once cease to be effective. Likewise, it must be a priesthood that can establish peace for its people, if it is to accomplish that for which it is instituted.

Are these attributes indispensable parts of the portrait of Melchizedek as type of the High Priest Christ, they are not the main attributes. Much more is made of the characteristics of Melchizedek in the following verse : "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." These are the attributes, — or the attribute of eternity directly underlying them — that are in the following discussion taken up and applied to Christ. The oracle of Psalm 110 had spoken of Melchizedek as an eternal High Priest. But as historical person Melchizedek had both father, and mother, beginning of days and end of life. The author sees no way in which the eternity of Melchizedek can be distilled out of the Genesis story than in a negative way. Genesis mentions nothing of his parentage, genealogy, nor of his birth or death. As far as the record goes he had none. The Genesis account must therefore be taken as typical in what it omits as well as in what it records. Had the circumstances of Melchizedek's birth and death been recorded, he could not have been a type of the Christ. The silences as well as the utterances of the Spirit of God in Genesis were intentional. Possessed of such attributes Melchizedek is seen to rise above all human limitations. And that as person. These attributes characterize the person Melchizedek, not the priest. Of Melchizedek the man we do not read that he had parents, nor that he was the descendant of whatever person, great or ignoble, nor have we proof of his birth or death. Some want to understand these attributes of his priesthood. They would then interpret : "No *priestly* father or *priestly* mother etc.". But we can scarcely speak of a priestly mother. Priesthood is here represented as following the personality. The principle upon which the writer argues here is that the official dignity in the case of Melchizedek and Christ is derived from the personal dignity, the official eternity from the personal eternity. Just the opposite from

the Levitical priests. That Melchizedek had no father nor mother, nor genealogy, nor beginning of days, predicates eternity of him looking to the past. And that he had no end of days makes him eternal as regards the future. He has personal eternity therefore as well a *parte ante* as a *parte post*.¹⁾ Now because he was eternal, as these attributes reveal, Hebrews says He was "made like the Son of God." Notice the title "Son of God". This cannot be understood of our Lord in His historical appearance as Son of Man. For as such He had both a birth and a death, a beginning of days and an end of life. This title characterizes him in His heavenly, divine existence as He was from all eternity and will be to all eternity. After Him the Melchizedek of the Genesis record was patterned. The eternal Son of God was therefore the model for the person of Melchizedek. It is of importance to notice this. For if the greatness and eternity of Melchizedek's priesthood is derived from the greatness and eternity of his person, and if Christ is Priest after the order of Melchizedek, it follows from the fact that the Son of God was the model for the person of Melchizedek, that it is just the divine Sonship of Christ which shapes His priesthood and gives to it its unique nature.²⁾ And since it is the Melchizedekian nature of Christ's high priesthood which gives eternal efficacy to His priestly functions, makes Him the High Priest which we need, it follows that the divine Sonship makes His priesthood ideal, that this Sonship is the determining feature in the model high priest. Because He was the eternal Son of God, He could give eternal validity to what He as High Priest does. Because other High Priests were mere men and sinful they could not supply the wants of men, they could not be ideal high priests.

Because Melchizedek has been made like the Son of God, he "abideth a priest continually." This eternity nature of his priesthood is the one thing in Melchizedek above all else that interests the author. Upon a closer examination of this long sentence it will at once appear how important the author considers the attribute

1) Cf. Delitzsch.

2) Cf. Vos Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 pp. 593.

of eternity. The main proposition without the modifying clauses reads: "For this Melchizedek abideth a priest continually." The other typical attributes kingship, royalty, peace, are by the structure of the sentence subordinated to the attribute of eternity. Melchizedek is eternally priest because he possesses the aforementioned attributes. The author therefore not merely states that Melchizedek the type of Christ is an eternal high priest, but shows the reason why. Royalty and the ethical attributes of righteousness and peace are, according to this sentence, as necessary to an eternal priest as the absence of birth and death. Ethical perfection as well as royalty are here represented to be indispensable elements in an eternal priest.

A priest that is made like the Son of God must indeed be great. How great he is, it is the burden of verses 7 : 4—10 to prove. We are there told that he was greater than Abraham and, therefore, greater than the priestly Levites, Abrahams descendants. He was even greater than Abraham as was witnessed first by the matter of tithes, and then by the blessing. Abraham, the renowned, the highly honoured patriarch of the Jews, the father of the Old Testament covenant people, acknowledged his superiority by giving him a tenth of the spoils. This act is seen to been the more full of meaning, when we consider that Abraham at the time was not an obscure person, but at the height of glory. He was just returning from battle a victor over four kings and lauded deliverer of five others. From the hand of the king of Sodom he had spurned to accept as reward the captured goods. And yet, flushed with victory, that highly esteemed patriarch of the people of God acknowledged his inferiority to this priest of Salem by giving him — who had taken no part in the campaign — a tenth of the spoils. The dignity of this man indeed must have been great, if he could with propriety accept homage from so highly stationed a man. True, the Aaronic priests also possessed a dignity, a place of eminence in Israel, for they too received tithes. But their station in life was not the result of any personal dignity that attached to them. Rather the reverse ! Whatever personal dignity they might enjoy came to them through their office. It was of no concern who they

themselves were ; the tithes they received as descendants of Levi, for as such the Mosaic statutes had given them this legal right. Moreover, the tithes were given by the people in obedience to an express commandment of the Mosaic law, not spontaneously out of recognition of personal superiority. And they were given by people, who, but for the matter of the tithes, were in all respects their equals, for they were their brethren, who could claim the same dignity of being descendants of Abraham. How very different the relations between Melchizedek and the one from whom he received tithes ! No descent from Levi nor any command made it imperative for Abraham to give them. It was an entirely spontaneous act on the part of Abraham, out of due recognition of the superior greatness of the person of Salem's priest.

No less than the matter of the tithes, the blessing he gave to the patriarch proves his superior greatness. It is a universal law that the less is blessed of the better. Therefore he must have been the better and Abraham the less. This speaks strongly for the transcendent greatness of Melchizedek. For Abraham, whom he blessed, than whom he was greater, was no mean personage. He was the possessor of the promises. His were the promises of the covenant. Him God had singled out of all nations to be his God and the God of his seed. In him all the nations of the earth should be blest. His very name *Abraham*, given him by God, was a promise that he would become father of many nations. It was no small matter to bless so distinguished a man. And yet the moral greatness of Melchizedek was so great, that he could add his blessing to the inheritor of the promises.

Another mark of his greatness is to be found in the fact that he receiveth tithes as one who continually lives, whereas in the case of the Levites men that die receive them. It may at first seem hard to understand the statement, that Melchizedek — for he it is of whom the author here speaks — liveth, whereas the historical Melchizedek has long since passed away. But the Melchizedek of the Genesis narrative, of whom no death is recorded, has a life to which there is no end. The inscripturated Melchizedek is an eternal being having no death, for in Genesis he does nothing but

live. If therefore he lives unceasingly, this will the more enhance his greatness. For the dignity of men that die, as in the case of the Levites, is cut short when their life comes to an end. All superiority which the giving of tithes had ascribed to them is then over with. Another generation receives the honor, which formerly was theirs. Quite different with an ever living priest as Melchizedek! He never dies, never transmits his dignity to another, but from generation to generation men acknowledge his superiority by bringing him their tithes.

"Levi also who receiveth tithes paid tithes in Abraham" 7 : 9. By this argument the writer indicates that whatever superiority in the foregoing is ascribed to Melchizedek over Abraham, establishes his claim to superiority over all the descendants of Abraham. It is not a universal law that because a man is superior to the father, he is, therefore, superior to all the descendants. Often someone of these descendants aspires to a dignity, which the father never possessed. As an example, think of Terah, the father of Abraham, who never possessed the greatness which his son could claim. But with Abraham the case was different. He was the head and representative of the Jewish nation. The transactions of God with Abraham concerned him *as the federal representative of that race.* It was as the representative of all his generation that the promises were given him. If, therefore, he that had the promises acknowledged the superiority of the priest of Salem by giving him tithes, he acknowledged it likewise for all the unborn Levites, who through him were to become heirs of the promises, and whom he represented. Since the superior station in life of the Levites was made to rest upon the fact that they were of the loins of Levi and so of Abraham from whom Levi descended, therefore they, being in the loins of Abraham, gave tithes in Abraham and acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood to their own. Great indeed must this man have been who, by his transcendent personality, could shed so much lustre upon his priesthood, that even the timehonored God-ordained Aaronic priests, as well as their patriarchal representative, have done him homage.

After the author in 7 : 1—10 has made plain on the basis of the Genesis narrative, what the order of Melchizedek is (7 : 1—3), and how it is superior to the Levitical order (7 : 4—10), he now proceeds upon the basis of the oracle in Ps. 110, which had spoken of the Messiah as a priest after that order, to apply these truths to the case of Christ. He points out what the nature of Christ's priesthood is, and how Christ as well as Melchizedek is superior to the Old Testament priests, the sons of Levi.

However, he does not merely make application to the case of Christ of his findings in 7—10, but shows the farreaching results, which the Melchizedekian nature of Christ's priesthood has. Our Lord's entrance upon His priestly duties spells for the Old Testament economy of things nothing less than the complete overthrow of the Aaronic priesthood (7 : 11), of the law regulating it (7 : 11, 18), nay more, of the very covenant in which it took the central position (7 : 22). For the New Testament economy it meant an effective (7 : 16) and unchangeable (7 : 24) priesthood, a guarantee that what the covenant aimed at, would be accomplished (7 : 22), and the attainment of "perfection" for the covenant people for whom He officiates (7 : 11, 19, 25).

By a series of arguments the writer establishes the superiority of Christ, the Melchizedek High Priest, above the Old Testament priesthood. He first proves the superiority from the *mere fact* that Christ's priesthood has superseded the Aaronic order (7 : 11—14). Next from *the power* of Christ's priesthood as compared with the *unprofitableness* of the Old Testament order (7 : 15—19). Then from Christ's becoming Priest *with an oath* (7 : 20—22). And finally the *endless duration* of Christ's priesthood (7 : 23—25) as contrasted with the *transient nature* of the Old Testament priests.

In his first argument the writer starts out from the fact of Ps. 110, that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Why was He not of Aaron's order ? The very fact that He is priest after another order proves to the author that the Aaronic priesthood could not accomplish what it was destined to do. For a priesthood, as we have seen above, has as its function to bring its people to

perfection.¹⁾ Had the Aaronic order been able to do this, Ps. 110 would not have needed to give the promise of a priest after another order. There would not then have been place for such a priest. The reason why such a demand, to lead to perfection can be made of every priesthood, is because, as the parenthetical phrase "for under it the people received the law" indicates, the whole religious system is centred in the priesthood. The law regulating religion in the Old Testament covenant rested on the priesthood as a basis, had that priesthood as its presupposition. Now this Old Testament system of religion, naturally, as all religions systems must do, aimed at securing perfection for its worshippers. This it aimed to do through its priesthood. But therein it failed. The very fact therefore that a heterogeneous (ἑτερος) priest arose, is proof that the old sacerdotal order and with it the law resting on it, was being changed by God. The law based on and assuming this priesthood, cannot remain after the priesthood has been removed. That the old order has indeed been removed, is proved from the promise of the Messianic Priest given in Psalm 110. He was not of Aaron's line, as He should have been to be Aaronic priest. For none but Aaron's descendants might officiate as priests under the Old Testament regime. But our Lord was of the kingly tribe of Juda, concerning which the Mosaic law had said nothing concerning priesthood.

The fact that the old order of priesthood and with it the law resting on it, was destined to be superseded, is said to be still more evident from a study of the nature of the new order to which Christ belongs. He is Priest after the similitude of Melchizedek, being priest not as those were, appointed by the law expressed in a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. (7 : 14—19). Therefore Christ is such a kind of priest as the law could not produce. The law could only produce such as were fleshly descendants of Levi, regardless of any personal qualifications for office. Christ, however, clearly is not a law-appointed priest, for He attained to the priesthood apart from all idea of fleshly descent,

1) Cf. chapter V.

just as Melchizedek, by reason of inherent spiritual fitness for the office. And just as the personal worth in the case of Melchizedek (cf. 7 : 1—3) was summed up in the characteristic of eternity, so here in His eternity-attribute, Christ's fitness is said to consist. The eternity of Christ makes Him priest *with power*. It must be reminded here what has been said in explanation of 7 : 1—3, that eternity with the author is a term denoting quality as well as duration. Eternal is to Hebrews whatever belongs to the heavenly, eternal world and shares in its nature and power. This eternity-nature of Christ's divine personality makes Christ an affective High Priest, a Priest with power to accomplish that for which He is Priest. How different from the priests appointed by the law with whom He is here contrasted ! They arose to the priesthood not because of any personal ability to accomplish the purpose of the priesthood, nay, if it must be said, personally they were mere functionaries, powerless to accomplish the end of their priesthood. The only claim they had to the priesthood was that as sons of Levi the law had assigned to them that position. But their priesthood must be one in which power, effectiveness was lacking, for they attained to their office after the law of a *carnal* commandment. The ordinances regulating the appointment to the priestly office were fleshly, treated of fleshly requirements, such as that the person be a descendant of Levi, be without bodily blemish etc. They had reference entirely to this material, fleshly sphere.¹⁾ But because the commandment appointing these priests related entirely to the carnal, corruptible world, the priesthood reared upon the basis of this carnal commandment must, like all carnal, corruptible things, pass away with time. Such a priesthood has not the power to bring effective or eternal redemption, since eternity itself lies beyond the limits of such a carnal priesthood. But Christ has this power. His is the power that arises from an "indissoluble life". This indissoluble life does not merely imply that Christ remains for ever High Priest in heaven and can continually intercede without any cessation in His priesthood that

1) Cf. Delitzsch.

would arise through death. Some have understood the indissoluble life to refer to Christ's resurrected and glorified life in heaven.¹⁾ If so, even then this resurrected life of Christ is viewed by the author as a revelation of His eternal life. But what is meant is rather the eternal divine life itself of the Son of God. This interpretation is necessitated by the relation in which Christ's indissoluble life is placed to that of Melchizedek. For it is said that as regards such a life, He is priest after the likeness of Melchizedek. In 7 : 3 Melchizedek, because of his indissoluble life was said to be made like the Son of God. In 7 : 3 the only adequate explanation is that this refers to Christ's divine, eternal existence. What in all probability is the meaning of this phrase is, that the New Testament or ideal High Priest has a life, which in obedience to the demand of the true high priesthood, He can give as a sacrifice in death, without that life being thereby dissolved in death. As a consequence He can, after giving His indissoluble life in death, appear before the presence of God with His offering, to make application of His atonement sacrifice, and thus bring about the perfection of His people.

These words not merely throw light upon the inner nature of Christ's Melchizedekian high priesthood in its superiority over the Levitical, but they also make clear that by the entrance of Christ upon His priestly activity, the law of Levitical descent has been annulled, and in fact with it the whole legal character of the Old Testament dispensation. For law (*κατὰ νόμον* without the article) is replaced by power. One legal priesthood has not been supplanted by another legal priesthood, but by a priesthood of a very different kind (*ἕτερος*), one characterized by power. The disannulling took place, when Psalm 110 proclaimed, that the Melchizedekian High Priest would supersede the legal high priest. However, Psalm 110, when announcing the annulment of the legal, weak and unprofitable system, at the same time introduced a better hope.

The law had provided for a Levitical priesthood, which had

1) So Delitzsch.

proven weak, since it could not bring the desired perfection. The hopes which it evoked could, therefore, not be satisfied. The psalmist however promised a priest after a different order, one not weak and unprofitable, but clothed with power, one not keeping men separated, from God, but bringing into complete union with God. That oracle, therefore, introduced a better than did the law.¹⁾ Now that Christ the Priest of the new covenant has made possible the communion with God, the people of the new covenant see in Him their hopes realized, and can take courage thereby to draw nigh to God. In this one sentence "we draw nigh to God" the whole end of the covenant is summed up. And this is seen to depend entirely upon the fact that Christ is the true, the perfect High Priest. Therefore the Christian religion, the religion of the new covenant, of which the Melchizedekian priesthood is the central feature, is a religion of a better hope than the law could provide, since by it, or if you will, by that which awakens this hope; i. e. the effectual priesthood of the new covenant, we attain to the end of all religion, the one want of mankind, the drawing nigh to God.

The following argument which the author introduces, portrays the Melchizedekian High Priest as the Guarantor of what the covenant seeks to accomplish. The argument is again given in the form of a contrast with the priesthood of the old covenant. Since then, thus the meaning of 7 : 20—22 can be circumscribed, Christ, in contradistinction to the sacerdotal order of the former covenant, has been made Priest with an oath, we have in Him a guarantee that the purpose of the covenant in which He officiates as its Priest, will be effected, and therefore a proof of the superiority of it to the covenant in which those priests officiated. The Old Testament priesthood was not put in office with an oath. The law had merely ordained that Aaron and his generation should have charge of the priesthood. Christ, however, was made Priest with an oath. In Psalm 110, where the Bible mentions the appointment of the Messiah to the priesthood, that appointment is intro-

1) Vs. Delitzsch, Wescott cf. Riehm, Lünemann.

duced with the words : "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent." From this statement Hebrews draws the argument given in these verses. The principle of it is that God does not swear oaths except in matters of supreme importance. The oath is meant to be the guarantee that the matter concerning which Jehovah has sworn, is to be of an unchangeable nature. The Messiah is by this assurance destined to remain Priest through all eternity, a Priest for ever as was Melchizedek. The fact that Christ is made Priest with an oath must imply that His high priesthood was of such a nature, a perfect high priesthood, that God could appoint Him eternally High Priest with an irrevocable oath. The Old Testament high priests could not be thus appointed, since they were not a perfect priesthood and could give no assurance that the purposes of the priesthood would be realized.¹⁾

He by His eternal work continually can bring men nigh to God. He is therefore ἐγγύος, Surety of the better covenant.²⁾ He is the Surety, the Guarantee that the covenant will accomplish that which it purposes to do. In having this guarantee the new covenant is the better covenant that has come to replace the old. Notice that the conclusion is not that because Christ is an oath-appointed priest, therefore He as Priest gives us more surety, but He is Surety of a better covenant. The nature of the new covenant is determined by what its High Priest is. Because He is an eternal High Priest, His covenant is also eternal. This statement implies no less than the abrogation of the whole Old Testament economy. The author has waxed bolder as he went along. First (7 : 11) he announced the abrogation of the priesthood, then of the law governing it, and now of the very covenant in which it is found, so that the entire Old Testament economy is proclaimed to be at end, and the new covenant, a new religious system, the Christian

1) Cf. Riehm pp. 458—459.

2) The view held by several federal divines that these words signify that Christ is Surety by God on behalf of men that the conditions of the covenant will be fulfilled on the part of men, is not sustained by the passage itself, although as T. C. Edwards in *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 126 allows, that view is "a just theological inference from the passage". The thought for whom Christ was Surety lies beyond the intention of the author here.

religion, the religion of a better hope grounded in a better priesthood, takes its place.

The last mark of superiority above the Levitical priesthood which this High Priest after Melchizedek's order is said to have, is that He has a priesthood that is not transferred from Him to another. This thought followed very naturally upon the thought of the oath. That fact already implied the unchangeable nature Christ's priesthood. The statement in Psalm 110 that Christ is to be High Priest forever, undoubtedly forms the basis for this argument. The Old Testament priests did not live for ever. By reason of death they were not suffered to remain. Their priesthood was underbroken by death. At best their work was partial. It was not a finished product. Death cut short their priestly activity in the midst of it. The priesthood had to be transmitted to another, who again in his turn gave proof of the imperfection of his work by having another for the same reason that he succeeded, succeed him. Christ's priesthood, however, already shown to be perfect in other respects, is the perfect priesthood also in this regard, that it knows of no such cessation by death. He, having like Melchizedek an eternal life, continues Priest for ever. His priesthood gives witness to the fact that it rises high above the imperfections attaching to the Old Testament order, whereas it knows of no transmission. It is a priesthood the duties of which this one Melchizedek Priest eternally discharges. This priesthood, having no successor in office, is therefore also final. Christ as High Priest did supersede the unprofitable Aaronic order, but is to be superseded by none. This unchangeable nature of the New Testament priesthood places the stamp of finality upon the whole Christian religion, upon the new covenant of which it is the centre and determining element.

The effect of the eternal duration of this Priest is, as can be expected, farreaching. That He can save ; i. e. bring sinners to the perfect state of felicity in communion with God, the foregoing (7 : 11, 16, 19) had abundantly proved. Here this Melchizedek High Priest, never dying, is held up to view as one who is continually engaged in this business of saving, as the present (σώζειν) strongly emphasizes. Never will this eternal Priest fail those that

seek salvation by Him. And this salvation will be lacking nothing in completeness, for He can save to the uttermost. A fulness of salvation to the satisfaction of the very last demand that can be made¹⁾ is guaranteed by the eternal duration of Christ's priesthood. That the temporal signification, to wit, that He can save to the uttermost point of time, ought not to be excluded, but rather emphasized, the time element prominent in this context seems to demand. For the ground is that He ever liveth (πάντοτε ζῶν) to make intercession for them. No one, not even he that shall seek His priestly intervention when time shall near its end, shall ever have reason for disappointment in Him. None shall find in Him a departed High Priest that has ceased to exist, and therefore ceased to intercede. Even then when time draws to a close, forever He liveth to make intercession for those who through His mediation seek to come unto God. He saves by intercession. Of this intercessory saving activity, so this verse tells us, the unending life of this Priest is the eternal guarantee that by it even the very last requirement of salvation will be fully met.

We have now discussed a series of comparisons with the Aaronic priests and the economy under which they officiated, which revealed the superior excellence of the Melchizedekian High Priest and the new order of things which He introduced. There remains yet one comparison in the closing verses of chapter Seven between Christ and the Aaronic order. But the question comes, does what 7 : 26—28 speak of characterize Christ as *Melchizedekian* High Priest? In vain do we seek for attributes in the type Melchizedek which are here ascribed to Christ. Neither sinlessness nor exaltation above the heavens, nor any sacrifice, can be predicated of the priest Melchizedek. It is possible, as Dr. Bruce has suggested, that 7 : 26 reveals to us the perfect counterparts of what were present as dim shadows in Melchizedek. In the terms ὁσιος, ἁγαθός, ἀμίαντος we would then have to see the counterpart of the "righteousness" of the type Melchizedek; in the phrase κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν that of "peace"; and in ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν γενόμενος

1) Cf. Wescott Riehm Delitzsch.

that of "king". But where in Melchizedek can we find anything that corresponds to the selfsacrifice of Christ of which 7:27 speaks? Dr. Bruce¹⁾ has offered the suggestion of conceiving Christ's selfsacrifice as consisting in faithful devotion to the interests of God and man in an evil world, and of so finding in it a correspondence between Christ and Melchizedek. Dr. Bruce, however, suggests the solution, only rightly to reject it as something that was foreign to the writer's mind.

But though we cannot lay our finger upon anything of the Melchizedek portrait as the typical element, to which these attributes in Christ correspond, we should err if we concluded that to the mind of the writer the traits here mentioned did not characterize our Lord as Melchizedek High Priest. We may not be able, especially in the matter of the sacrifice, to find something corresponding in the type, but that it is to the author the Melchizedekian High Priest and not e. g. Christ as High Priest after Aaron's order that bears these traits, is a view which the verses in question force upon us. Christ did not bear these traits, specifically the selfsacrifice, as a Priest after Aaron's order, but as it is the aim of these passages to prove, exactly in contrast to the priests of Aaron's order. And as we have elsewhere attempted to prove, Christ was *only*, to Hebrews, High Priest after Melchizedek's order. Here too it is the same Melchizedekian High Priest which these verses seek to portray. The term *τοιοῦτος* with which this section is introduced, referring as it does to the statements just made, tells us that what is here said is a further characterization of the kind of High Priest; i. e. the Melchizedekian, previously described. And in 7:28 it is said of this High Priest that in contrast with the Aaronic line, He was made High Priest with an oath. This naturally refers to Psalm 110. But according to that Psalm He was made High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Whatever high priestly characteristics are here ascribed to Christ must by the demand of the context therefore be understood of Him as *Melchizedekian* High Priest.

1) Hebrews, p. 284, 285.

The difficulty cannot be solved by denying a sacrificial character to the death of Christ. It has been argued¹⁾ that because these verses describe Christ as He exists in heaven, the death of Christ occurring on earth falls outside of His high priestly activity. However,²⁾ that death is conceived of by Hebrews as a high priestly act. We may not be able to deduce the selfsacrifice of Christ from anything in Melchizedek's history, nevertheless that the selfsacrifice was an high priestly act, and as such an act of Christ the Melchizedekian High Priest, is the view of the writer of Hebrews.

The most plausible view regarding the relation of Christ's self-sacrifice to the Melchizedekian priesthood seems to me to be the following, suggested by Dr. Bruce. The story of Melchizedek and the Messianic Psalm 110 is introduced by the writer to prove that there is a priesthood apart from the Levitical order. Therefore Jesus the Messiah, although He is not of Aaron's line, is yet a Priest. But if He be a Priest, He must also have something to offer. This something can be nothing else than Himself. It is the only offering He ever brought.³⁾ Thus that Christ is Priest is deduced from the relation in which He stood as the Messiah to Melchizedek, but the nature of the functions which Jesus as Priest must perform, the sacrifice included, is derived from the general conception He has of a priest. Whatever the writer may borrow from the Melchizedek story in explaining the functions of Christ does not serve to explain the nature of these functions, to determine what is or what is not included, but merely, as chapter Seven has already taught us, to point out the *eternal efficacy* of Christ's high priestly work. The essential nature of the high priestly functions is in the case of every high priest, Melchizedekian as well as Aaronic, held to be the same.

In order to prove that the eternal Melchizedekian High Priest could give eternal validity to His offering, and therefore was the High Priest that became us, the author (17:26) points to the ethical and metaphysical attributes which are contained in the

1) So e. g. the Socinians.

2) Cf. chapter V.

3) Cf. Bruce p. 434.

eternity attribute of Christ. Such a High Priest became us, for in His eternity attribute are implied the attributes : holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and higher than the heavens. The eternal sphere to which this eternal Melchizedek High Priest belongs is the sphere where all inherent sin as well as contact with sin is barred. From the way in which τοιοῦτος and the word ὅσιος etc. are connected, we notice that here the same idea was present to the writer's mind which we found expressed in 5 : 1—3 ; namely, that eternity and ethical worth go together. In the former the latter are implied.

The words ὅσιος, ἀκακος, ἀμίαντος mean respectively pious, innocent, free from defilement. They contrast this High Priest with the Old Testament officials. They possessed these qualities in an external, typical sense. They were ceremonially pure, not ethically. As the mitre upon the brow of the high priest indicated, he had to be "Holiness unto the Lord". But this could only be said of him in the ceremonial sense that he was set apart to devote himself exclusively to Jehovah's service. Guileless, innocent he was insofar as his dealings with other men were friendly, devoid of fraud. Likewise he was to be ceremonially free from all defilement. And he had to be separated from sinners. Seven days before the great Day of Atonement the high priest had to withdraw from society into one of the temple chambers, lest by contact with the sinful people he not be the Levitically clean high priest which he had to be, when he went to offer sacrifice. Christ, however, was in His inner ethical life what these high priests were only ceremonially. In His relation to God He was pious, in His relation to men guileless, no defilement, no spot or blemish attached to His sinless nature. So complete is the freedom from sin of this High Priest, that He is separate from sinners, removed from the very world in which sin reigns. Just as the Old Testament high priest had to withdraw from the atmosphere of sin into the temple of God, so this High Priest has withdrawn into the sinless sphere of the heavenly temple of God, where sin cannot enter. And He is "made higher than the heavens." Not merely is our High Priest therefore exalted to the heavens, a fact already negatively expressed in "separate from

sinners'', but He is exalted above all creaturely limitations which could possibly form a breach between Him and God, and is placed in the very closest proximity to God. No limitation can therefore hinder Him in the free execution of His high priestly work.¹⁾ A High Priest that has Himself attained to such close union with God, can, will secure by His intercession the most perfect union with God for His people.

Possessed of such ethical and metaphysical attributes, Christ is the High Priest which our circumstances required, as 7 : 27 in a negative way goes on to show. The Aaronic high priests, each time they went to intercede, had to bring a new sacrifice as the basis of their new intercession. Without a sacrifice to do away with their own sins, they could not act as intercessors. New sins made a new sacrifice each time a compulsion. Their sacrifice for their people also had to be continually repeated, whereas these lacked all eternal effect. These sacrifices could not perfect as to conscience (10 : 1). It might seem to the externalistic readers of Hebrews that the continual sacrifices of the Aaronic high priests were a point in their favor ; here that fact is pointed out to be a defect. Every time these high priests went to intercede, in other words every Day of Atonement was a testimony against this order, pointing out clearer than words could express, that their sacrifices, because repeated, lacked the eternal validity which they ought to have had, the complete wiping out of sins.²⁾ But what with the sinless attributes He possesses, Christ is under no such constraint. He need not offer for His own sins, since He has none. And for His people's sins He brought sacrifice once for all, when He offered up Himself. And if once for all, then it must have been a perfect sacrifice , one which had eternal value, which took away completely all His people's sins, and need therefore not be repeated. The underlying reason, why Christ in contrast with the Levitical high priests, need not make repetition of sacrifice in order daily to intercede, we learn from 7 : 28. Conditions could not be otherwise than they were with the Levitical law-made high priests,

1) Cf. Hofmann : Schriftbeweis II, p. 404, 405. Riehm.

2) Cf. Hofmann : Schriftbeweis pp. 286, 287. Wescott in loc.

for they were mere men, whereas Christ, the oath appointed High Priest, is the eternal Son. Of the men it is to be expected, whereas all men are sinful, that they will have ἀσθενεία; i.e. sinful infirmities. The Son, however, just because He is *the Son*, developed the very opposite of sinful infirmities; namely, a perfect obedience, and now, translated to the heavenly sinless sphere, is a High Priest perfected forevermore.¹⁾ The sinful infirmities of these priests made continual repetition of sacrifices for continually recurring sins a necessity. The perfection of this Son made all sacrifice for Himself unnecessary. Moreover, the eternal Son of God could give to His sacrifice an eternal validity, so that when once performed, it was performed once for all ἐφάπαξ.

The crowning statement of what the author has to say of the Melchizedek High Priest is that He is a High Priest, "Who is set on the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens." Here the kingship of Christ is made subservient to His priesthood, helping to make it the effectual one that it is, in fact, it is said to be the chief contribution. The right hand is the symbol of power, since with our hands, especially the right hand, we exercise our strength. In oriental countries the custom prevailed, that the mighty men in the kingdom took seat at the right had of the king, when the latter was upon his throne. This was symbolical. They were the right hand of the king, the arm of his strength, whereby he exercised his power in his kingdom. And if, as at times occurred, one of these mighty men was placed at the right hand upon the throne, it meant that henceforth he was to be co-regent in the kingdom. Here Christ, whereas He is placed on the right hand of the throne, by Him Who is Himself the Majesty with power over all, is appointed by God to be His viceregent over the dominion of this Ruler of Creation. This Kingship under God of the Christ is the highest guarantee-and therefore called the crowning is statement-that He indeed the perfect High Priest which became us, that He can accomplish the purpose of His priesthood. For, what He as High Priest petitions for, He has the authority and power to

1) Cf. chapter V.

carry out as King. As Priest He petitions for forgiveness of sins, for help in infirmities, redemption from the corruption of sin, and complete salvation. And as King He has received from God the power to carry out just those things which form the burden of His high priestly petition. Greater guarantee that He is the effective High Priest is not possible.

Having studied what Hebrews has to say on the Melchizedek nature of our Lord's priesthood, we now come to a discussion of the view of Dr. A. Kuyper and Bishop B. F. Wescott, who hold that Melchizedek represents the original priesthood of man, and that Christ insofar as He is Melchizedek High Priest also represents this original priesthood.¹⁾ No doubt the names of two such brilliant scholars as these, lead us to expect that the view of which they are the defenders, will have much that recommends it. And if I feel constrained to differ from these noted scholars, it is not because I question the original priesthood of man of which they find in Melchizedek the representative, but because to my mind the teachings of Hebrews regarding Melchizedek do not square with their hypothesis. There is much that is attractive in the theory of these noted men. It emphasizes the fact that sin, however important a factor it may be in the life of man, is nevertheless an intervening episode. The conditions that obtained before the entrance of sin are the essentials, inherent in the nature of man, and whatever modification sin has brought in the priesthood, however great, is yet accidental and destined at least in a sense to vanish as soon as the work of reconciliation by Christ has been accomplished. Sin, both as guilt and as corruption, is banished by the redemptive work of Christ. And with this banishment ceases also the necessity of offering for sin. But the original priesthood of man will remain through all eternity. The plans of the Creator of man have not been made to collapse by the entrance of sin into the world. For by Christ's redemptive work the world is reconciled to God, so that in the renewed creation God will again be all in all, and man will, eternally perform the functions of the

1) Cf. on the theories of these men the historical introduction.

priesthood for which he as creature was originally destined. Moreover, the idea of the universality of the priesthood is eloquently defended in this theory. As contrasted with the priesthood of Aaron which was national and limited to one tribe and generation, this theory emphasizes the priesthood of *man*. Every man ought to be and every redeemed man will be a priest unto his God.

But the question comes, is this original priesthood represented by Melchizedek? I do not believe to be doing the view an injustice in saying that when making Melchizedek a representative of this original priesthood, they have made an ingenious finding, but that nowhere does Scripture supply ground for the assertion. As it appears to me, neither the story of Genesis nor what is said of him in Hebrews, lends due support to the theory. Melchizedek did officiate under the regime of sin, and how then can he represent this original priesthood which had ceased to exist with the entrance of sin into the world? True, in these theories Melchizedek is not represented as a wholesome representative, but as a ruins of what once was. But how could a sinful man as Melchizedek ever approach directly to God as sinless man did, and then receive the stamp of God's approval as Melchizedek evidently did in Genesis? His priestly doings could only be acceptable through the great High Priest for sin that was to come in the Messiah. But that makes his priesthood soteriological. Further the *vicarious* nature of Melchizedek's priesthood leads us to expect that it is soteriological. Melchizedek here acts as Abraham's priest, securing God's blessing in matters which do not concern himself but Abraham. In the original priesthood this vicarious nature is absent. There every person as priest went himself directly to his God. At most we can conceive of heads of families and of tribes in the original state as approaching God as representatives of their household or generation. But then only in regard to matters for which they as the head were directly responsible. Such a representative priesthood was in no way a curtailment of the personal priesthood of the individual members. It was not vicarious in the sense that it performed the business of others. In the case of Melchizedek, however, the priesthood is strictly vicarious. Melchizedek was in no way

a natural superior of Abraham, belonged not to his kingdom or generation. And they were the personal interests of Abraham which, according to the blessing he gave, concerned the priest Melchizedek in his meeting with the patriarch.

In the abstract we can indeed conceive of a representative head of unfallen humanity, who unites in himself the common interests of the human race and who for men is the representative in things pertaining to God. However, must we not rather think of man's original, sinless relation to God as having been so direct and so close, that no priest needed to be interposed to bring his personal interests before God? Adam cannot serve as an example of such a representative priesthood, for his position of representative head of humanity did not involve the duty as priestly representative to bring to God for others the priestly devotion which they as priests were required to bring. Nor can our Lord as divine Son be thought to occupy the position of representative priest in the sinless world. He as Son of God was Mediator between God and the created world. But that was an office distinct from the original priesthood of man. Naturally, a representative of man's original priesthood, because of the nature of the office, representing men in things pertaining to God, must himself be man. Therefore were Christ to be an unsoteric Priest in the state of rectitude, it would imply the fact of the incarnation of Christ apart from sin. For without becoming man He could not fulfill that office.

The main objections, however, enter in, when we come to study Hebrews. For, as we have already seen in the study of Hebrew's conception of a high priest, the author knows of no unsoteriological priesthood (cf. Chapter III). Every priest, as well the Melchizedek as the Aaronic, must offer for sin (5 : 1, 8 : 3.). Sympathy is an indispensable attribute in a true high priest, also in the heavenly High Priest, since He must intercede for sinful people 2 : 17, 4 : 14, 5 : 2. To this cannot be objected that Christ, besides being High Priest after Melchizedek's order, also brought a sacrifice for sin and "fulfilled" the Aaronic order. For as we shall see later on¹⁾ Christ was only High Priest after Melchizedek's order. He

1) Chapter VI.

never was High Priest after the order of Aaron. Nor did He fulfill the order of Aaron. He annulled it. The Aaronic priesthood was annulled the very moment another priest arose out of the tribe of Judah 7 : 11—14.

The author, wherever he makes mention of the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, speaks of Him in soteriological terms. In 5 : 6, after having stated that every high priest must offer gifts and sacrifices for sin, the author calls Christ High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. In 5 : 10 it is as *Author of eternal salvation* that Christ is called of God an High Priest *after the order of Melchizedek*. According to 6 : 20 the High Priest of the new covenant is a *Forerunner*. He does not return from the Holy of Holies with the veil closing behind Him as a visible sign that free communion with God had not been secured. He is a Forerunner, an effective Saviour, One Who takes His people along with Him to the presence and communion with God. This *effective Saviour* is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (6 : 20.). In 7 : 25 it is said of the unchangeable priesthood of this Melchizedekian High Priest, that its effect is that He can save to the uttermost. The redemption which He secures is *αἰώνιον* (9 : 12). The things pertaining to God, which according to 2 : 1, 7 it is the business of the heavenly High Priest to perform, is limited by the phrase : "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." And whatever is said in chapters IX and X of the work of the heavenly or Melchizedekian High Priest, presents sin as the ground for this activity.

V.

THE COURSE OF TRAINING WHICH CHRIST HAD TO UNDERGO TO BECOME MELCHIZEDEKEAN OR IDEAL HIGH PRIEST, — OR THE τελείωσις OF CHRIST.

In order to answer to the ideal of what a high priest should be, Hebrews tells us that Christ had to undergo a course of training. Only by a thorough preparation could Christ obtain certain of the attributes ; e.g. sympathy, which the high priesthood demanded of Him. Accordingly there is a series of texts in Hebrews which tell us, that Christ during His earthly life received this training, or as it is more proper to say, that represent His earthly life, the death included, (cf. 5 : 7) as a course of training for the priesthood. The passages that have come under consideration are : 2 : 10, 17, 18, 4 : 15, 5 : 4—10, 7 : 28. From these passages we learn that the school of training, which Christ passed through was the sufferings which He experienced (cf. 2 : 10). These came to Him, as 5 : 7 informs us, "in the days of His flesh"; i.e. in the days, when He was subject to the ἀσθενεία, the weaknesses of this earthly life. In this school of sufferings He had to learn, negatively, the strength of the temptations, and, positively, the obedience arising from a victorious struggle against these temptations. Through this school of preparation He attained as High Priest to what the author designates as τελείωσις, a state of "perfection" not previously enjoyed. Christ was τετελειωμένον, as 7 : 28 tells us, when, after having practised a perfect obedience in this world of infirmities, He was separated from the world of sinners and made higher than the heavens. In other words His state of τελείωσις began when His earthly life was brought to a close.

The term τελειῶσαι appears in various forms in the Epistle. It is used in the abstract in 7 : 11, where it is stated that perfection did not come by the Levitical high priesthood. In 7 : 19 it is said that "the law made nothing perfect." The word is used both of Christ and of believers. Here the word concerns us only in so far as it has reference to Christ. According to some it must be understood in a ceremonial sense, of the consecration to, or the entrance of Christ upon the duties of His high priesthood. This view is no longer held to day. Others, basing their opinion upon 2 : 9, 10, see in this word the equivalent of the glory of which 2 : 9 speaks. The perfecting in 2 : 10 would then be another word for the *crowning* of the ninth verse. Τελείωσις according to this view indicates the glory of the heavenly state of "perfection", as the crown to which Christ attained, because of the cross He endured in His earthly sufferings. ¹⁾ Again others understood by it a progressive moral development of character in our Lord. Christ to this class was made *perfect in character* through His sufferings by learning the virtue of sympathy and obedience. In His τελείωσις Christ became perfect in holiness. Still others hold that this word is used to designate how Christ has become fitted for the office of high priest. His experiences in the school of sufferings have qualified Him in an official objective sense to discharge His high priestly work. Finally then are those²⁾ who hold that it cannot be limited to any one of these senses, but that various meanings must be attached to it. Which is right ?

It is proper in determining its meaning to start from the etymology of the word. The fundamental idea which this word everywhere has is "to bring to completion."³⁾ It is to be clearly distinguished from the related word τέλειω. Whereas this word lays emphasis on the end as contrasted with the beginning or with that which is only half finished, the word τελειόω suggests the idea of that which is round and full. The completeness, the entirety is emphasized by it. It has therefore a wider meaning than τέλειω.

1) So Lünemann.

2) So Riehm Bruce.

3) Cf. Davidson p. 207 Note on "to perfect".

It can stand opposed to the beginning, since that also is incomplete, but further to anything which in whatever way does not answer fully to its purpose.¹⁾ It does not compel us to decide in favor of any of the above named views. It may etymologically convey any one or all of the ideas defended by the last three classes of commentators. It need not e.g. as our English and other versions might perhaps mislead us to think, denote that which is ethically perfect. It may have an ethical connotation and denote something ethically good in the highest degree, but as well something ethically bad, or even ethically indifferent.²⁾ Thus e.g. it can be said of the day, that it is perfected when the evening shades have fallen. The meaning of the word itself is therefore a general one. Whatever ethical connotation the word may have is not inherent in the word itself, but, as Kögel has pointed out, it receives from the contexts. From the passages dealing with the training of Christ in the school of suffering, therefore, we shall have to determine its meaning.

A question we must answer in this same connection is : If Christ was in one or other way "perfected" in the school of sufferings, in what sense could the sufferings be said to perfect Christ for the discharge of the high priesthood? Here again opinions differ. According to some the experiential sufferings of Christ taught Him to sympathize with the sufferings of others. His sympathy then turns on the sufferings themselves, not on their ethical consequences. Others hold that Christ's experience in His own sufferings taught Him how difficult it is to successfully resist the temptations that arise in sufferings. His sympathy is then of a specifically ethical nature, and enables Him to sympathize with the failings of His people in sufferings. Again another view holds that the sufferings, which Christ endured called forth Christ's own obedience, and enriched Him not directly in an official sense, but as regards His own inner ethical development. These sufferings enabled Him, according to this view, through His conduct to ascend to a higher ethical plane than He thus far occupied. Bearing

1) Cf. Kögel: Der Begriff τελειοῦν im Hebräerbrief in Theol. Studien. Herausgegeben Martin Kähler 1915.

2) For examples cf. Kögel idem.

these questions in mind let us see what the passages in which the course of training for the high priesthood which Christ received, are described, have to tell us. In 2 : 10 we read : "For it became Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι. Some commentators¹⁾ maintain, that the "perfecting" of Christ must be understood as equivalent to the crowning with honor and glory of the preceding verse. But so understood the τελειῶσις would only imply that Christ arrived at a state of glory, but would indicate nothing as to any qualification of Christ for the office of high priest. If this be the meaning of τελειῶσις here, then it is hard to understand why the author does not say, as he did in the ninth verse, "on account of the sufferings", to indicate that here the perfecting just as there the honor and glory was the reward which Christ received. But as it stands, "perfect through sufferings", the "perfection" is not as a reward after the sufferings, but the end to which God in the sufferings was gradually bringing Christ. The sufferings are then a course of training, and the τελειῶσις is the qualification for office resulting from them. The distinction between the word "suffering" (singular) of the ninth verse and "sufferings" (plural) in the tenth verse leads to the same conclusion. The substitution of the plural here evidently serves the purpose of picturing the sufferings as *successive events*, as a course of training which finally issued in Christ's becoming "perfect". The τελειῶσις must, therefore, here be understood not as a substitution for the "crowned with honor and glory" of the ninth verse, but as an equipment, which the sufferings wrought in Christ. This equipment further must be understood in an official sense, as qualifying Him for the discharge of His high priestly office. Through the suffering Christ was perfected as ἀρχηγὸς σωτηρίας. The sufferings made Christ a consummate Captain of Salvation.²⁾ How these sufferings effected this in Christ, whether by enabling Him as High Priest to sympathize with His people, or by bringing His inner ethical develop-

1) Cf. Lünemann.

2) Cf. von Soden on 2 : 10.

ment to a state of perfection, we are not told in this verse. Dr. Bruce thinks both are included. Arguing on the principle of "the better the man the better the tradesman will be", and allowing the possibility of development of the moral standard in Christ, he suggests that Christ was also equipped as High Priest by the development of the moral character of Christ through the sufferings. We cannot decide upon this question from the tenth verse, since it does not state how the sufferings led to perfection. The seventeenth and eighteenth verses, however, suggest the answer. From the eleventh verse onward the author shows the necessity of the identification of the Captain of Salvation and those for whom He labors. They must be one in spiritual covenant standing, in humanity, and then as the seventeenth verse states, "in all things." This "in all things" must refer to the sufferings of the earthly life, identical with His sufferings spoken of in verse ten. These He must share to be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. From this statement it would seem that the sufferings developed the ethical virtues of mercy and faith. But that the sufferings did not purpose a general ethical development in Christ is seen from the limiting phrase following, which shows in what respect Christ should be merciful and faithful ; i.e. *as High Priest*, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. This phrase tells us that the sufferings of Christ did not develop in Him a general sentiment of pity which would induce Him to be merciful to sufferers. But Christ's sufferings produced in Him a specifically ethical sympathy, a feeling for the failings of His people in sufferings, whereby He is induced to propitiate for their sins. The sufferings, therefore, perfected Christ as High Priest according to this verse in the sense that they produced in Him a mercy, a sympathy with His sinning people in sufferings, which mercy or, if you will, sympathy incited Him to perform His high priestly work of propitiation with faithfulness for them. How the sufferings are able to produce such a moral sympathy, the following verse explains. The rendering of the Authorized Version of our English Bible would lead us to suppose that the temptations of Jesus led to suffering. The fact is, it is just the reverse. In the

sufferings of His weak human nature He was laid open to temptations. A better rendering is that of the margin of the Revised Version : "For having been Himself tempted in that He suffered, He is able to succor those that are tempted". The temptations found an ally in His weak human nature which was naturally averse to sufferings. And since Christ's duty as High Priest called Him continually to suffer, He learned from His own experience how hard it is in sufferings to give steadfast resistance to the temptation not to suffer and thus remain loyal to His high priestly calling. His experience in sufferings, therefore, although He conquered by a battle every temptation, would render this High Priest sympathetically disposed to His sinning people who had fallen a prey to temptations in suffering. Not all temptations of men arise from suffering. But the author singles out this sort of temptation. For the readers were undergoing sufferings at present and their sufferings had become for them an occasion for sinning. Of these sufferings there was an analogy in Christ's life. He was the High Priest, that was able to succor them in their specific temptations, since He had been tempted in like circumstances. The readers can therefore safely go to this High Priest, since the memory of what He has experienced will render Him disposed to help them. The perfect tense (πέπονθεν) "He has suffered", in distinction from the imperfect, denotes not only a past idea, but also the resulting condition. The memory of those past sufferings, so this perfect tense tells us, remains ever present to Christ, and this ever present memory will guarantee an ever present moral sympathy in which according to this context this High Priest was perfected through sufferings.

Essentially the same idea we find in 4 : 15. There we are told Christ our High Priest can have sympathy with us in our weaknesses. His sympathy does not relate to the weaknesses as such, but to the susceptibility to temptation and sin that arises from those weaknesses. This is evident from the reason following, where we read that Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are." The weaknesses of our Lord's human nature made Him dread the sufferings, that lay on His pathway as Saviour. Therefore those weaknesses brought to Christ the temptation to swerve from the path

of duty. These weaknesses, so the author means to say, whereas they gave Him temptations to sinning, call forth His sympathy for us, whenever we pass through like experiences. Evidently a moral sympathy which Christ as heavenly High Priest carries for His errant people, is the thought the author here expresses. This is further clear from the value, which, according to 4 : 16, this sympathetic High Priest at the side of the Father has for us. He pleads with the Father that His people both may have mercy and find grace to help in time of need. This verse reveals to us the heavenly High Priest, driven on by His sympathy, interceding for His tempted people, in order to render God merciful, and to secure for them the timely grace to keep them standing in the midst of sufferings, lest they fall a prey to the otherwise overpowering temptations. Here again as in 2 : 18 the sufferings are portrayed as a course of training for Christ, whereby He learned the strength of temptation, so that He now has a moral sympathy for His suffering people in the capacity as sinners.

In 5 : 7—10 we again have Christ pictured to us in the school of sufferings. As has been indicated above, these verses serve the double purpose of showing that there is ground for the author's contention that in Christ there is present the qualification for the high priesthood mentioned in 5 : 2 ; i.e. human sympathy, and, secondly, that Christ did not assume the office of High Priest in a selfassertive manner, but was called by God. In order to show that in both these respects Christ is a model High Priest, the author in 5 : 7—10 points to the school of preparation for the high priesthood which Christ passed through. The Gethsemane scene is advanced as proof that there is ground in Christ for compassion with His people in temptation. (Cf. 5 : 2) Furthermore it is said that He learned obedience (5 : 9) by the things which He suffered. Here a new way is spoken of in which the sufferings formed Christ for the duties of the high priesthood. The strength of temptations, which Christ learned in the school of sufferings is the negative side of which here the positive is expressed. Here Christ is said to have learned obedience to the call of suffering by overcoming the temptations.

Several commentators¹⁾ hold, that 5:9 teaches that through the sufferings Christ underwent an inner ethical development. At the end of this course of training Christ's personal obedience to God was brought to a height of perfection, which it formerly did not possess. This cannot be the author's meaning here. That He "learned obedience" does not imply that He acquired a degree of obedience, which He did not possess before the temptations came His way. If Christ had not potentially had the full measure of obedience which would enable Him to conquer even the very greatest of the temptations He endured, how could He have ever stood the test? "Learning" here means "to bring out into conscious experience of action that which is present as an avowed principle antecedent to that action."²⁾ There is a difference between the desire and the determination to do a thing, and the carrying out of the intention, especially when the weakness of human nature inclines in the opposite direction. Only insofar as it relates to the carrying out of what had always in full measure been potentially present with Christ, can we speak of His "learning obedience." That this is the view to be taken of the matter we learn from the statement: "Though He was the Son, He learned from what He suffered the obedience."³⁾ It is a natural thing for any wellminded son to be obedient to his father. It is not natural for him to have to learn it through sufferings. But especially is this true of the relation of the divine Son to His Father, God. Nevertheless, the author says He learned *the* obedience, that thing which is called obedience (τὴν ὑπακοήν), from what He suffered.⁴⁾ Surely we cannot think of any inner moral development in the divine Son of God, but must understand it as described above. Evidently the "being made perfect" was associated in the author's mind with the "learning obedience" of the preceding verse. But how? Does the author mean "being made perfect *in obedience*, He became Author of eternal salvation?" If so, this text would lend certain

1) Cf. e. g. Riehm.

2) Cf. Vos in Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 585.

3) Cf. Wescott, Delitzsch, Hofmann.

4) Note the generic use of the word ὑπακοή.

support to the idea that Christ was brought to an ethically higher plane by the sufferings. Or does the author mean that having learned obedience, He *as High Priest* was made perfect ? This verse favors the latter view. For by being made perfect "He became Cause of eternal salvation." Through the process, therefore, whereby He was perfected, He made Himself *αἰτίας*, Cause of eternal salvation. But it is not the teaching of Hebrews that His inner ethical perfection as such, but rather what He the ever morally perfect High Priest has done, has made Him Cause of eternal salvation. By the steadfast obedience He rendered to the call of the high priesthood, He became a perfect High Priest, and as a result is now Author of Salvation. The underlying idea is that Christ, having brought to a successful close the period of probation, in which His obedience as high priestly Representative of His people was put to the severest test by sufferings, He by the persistent exercise of obedience, became a *perfected High Priest*. His official course of training was then at an end.

A last text to come under consideration here is 7 : 28. It is there said of the Son that He has been "perfected forevermore." The description here given of Christ is of Him not as He was on earth, but as He exists in heaven. (Cf. 7 : 26). *As such* He is the Son perfected forevermore. The perfect participle *τετελειωμένον* points to His past history on earth. In that period of His life He was made perfect. But how ? The contrast with men "which have infirmity" seems to imply that He was perfected by being freed from this infirmity. Elsewhere (Cf. 4 : 15, 5 : 7) *ἀσθενεία* is ascribed to Christ. We might suppose, therefore, as some commentators do, that the perfection was the laying aside of all infirmities. But this is not the meaning. The infirmity here (Cf. 7 : 27) has a sinful connotation. As such (Cf. 7 : 26) it cannot be predicated of Christ. The contrast of the author is rather : "The law appoints men high priests, which have sinful infirmity. The word of the oath makes the Son High Priest Who not only has not sinful infirmity, but has the exact opposite of that, a life of perfect obedience.

VI.

WHEN DID CHRIST'S HIGH PRIESTHOOD BEGIN ?

When did Christ's high priesthood begin ? This is a question which has busied theologians ever since the time of the Socinians. Was Christ a High Priest already when on earth, or did He become so when He ascended into glory ? Can His sufferings on the cross be counted as part of His high priestly work, or, does His priesthood start when He crossed the threshold of heaven and there presented His offering to His Father ? To judge from the present status of the question, the last word will not be said upon it for some time. Opinions are still too much divided. No solution has as yet been suggested that has won for itself any general acceptance.

The question in the Socinian controversy was one fraught with dogmatical interest. For the Socinians thought by transferring Christ's priesthood entirely to heaven, to be able to deny to the death the significance of a vicarious, atoning sacrifice. And even at the present day this question retains much of its dogmatical interest. Were all exegetes equally emphatic in their acknowledgment that Hebrews ascribes to our Lord's death an atoning significance, then no great dogmatical importance would attach to the question when Christ's high priesthood began. For just as under the Old Testament ritual in ordinary circumstances not the priest, but the one who came to offer, slew the sacrifice, whereafter the priest applied the blood to the horns of the altar, so the author might have conceived of Christ as first performing the part of offerer and victim, and then the duty of the priest. The fact of the atoning death would not then be denied, the priestly intercession would in any case rest upon it as a basis. It would

then be largely a question of classification.¹⁾ Instead of the ordinary classification of Prophet, Priest, and King, we would then have the fourfold division of Prophet, Sacrifice, Priest, and King. However, the atoning significance of that death is today by a large class of theologians being called in question. The essential part of the sacrifice is considered to lie not in that death itself, but in the consecrated life following. This in the case of the Old Testament sacrifices was symbolized by the blood which was smeared upon the horns of the altar, or sprinkled before the mercy seat ; in the case of Christ it is to be found in His continuous consecrated life in heaven. "The tendency of recent commentators" to speak with Dr. Bruce "following in the wake of Bähr, has been to throw the death into the shade, and make the stress lie on the subsequent transaction, the entrance of Christ into heaven through His own blood".²⁾ With such views opposing the orthodox one, wherein the death of Christ is considered the primal element in His sacrifice, the question when the priesthood of Christ began or, if you will, whether the death is considered by Hebrews to be an indispensable element of Christ's priesthood, is a question of supreme importance.³⁾

The occasion for this difference of opinion regarding the beginning of Christ's high priesthood lies in the two modes of representation which we find in Hebrews. It is not to be denied that Hebrews contains a series of texts, which seem to favor the opinion that Christ's high priesthood did not begin before His exaltation to heaven. On the other hand there are not a few texts, which seem to include the sufferings and death of Christ in His priesthood. Thus in 2 : 17 we read that it behoved Christ "in all things" (the death included) "to be made like His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God." The life and death are there represented as prerequisites to a priesthood, the functions of which, it would

1) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. p. 595. Davidson p. 146, 147.

2) Cf. Bruce : Hebrews 346.

3) Cf. Milligan : In The Expositor Vol. 8 Third Series p. 277 vs. the contention of Dr. Davidson that the question has little more than historical interest in connection with the Socinian controversy. Davidson p. 146, 147.

seem, are only discharged after the likeness in all things has been obtained. In 5 : 8—10 Christ "*became* Cause of eternal salvation" and was „called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" when the perfection attained to through His life and death had become a fact, therefore at His exaltation. He was *called*, greeted by God as High Priest when He crossed the threshold of heaven. Likewise in 6 : 20 our Lord *became* High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek upon His entrance as Forerunner into the heavenly Holiest. According to 7 : 26—28 the word of the oath appoints to the high priesthood the Son, One Who is perfected for evermore. But this perfection upon which the appointment by oath followed, was after His earthly life was brought to a close (cf. 5 : 7—10). 8 : 1—6 represents Christ as He is in heaven, and calls Him a minister of the *heavenly* sanctuary, and says that if He were on earth He could not be a High Priest at all. That seems to imply that as long as He was on earth He was not yet a High Priest. (cf. also 9 : 11, 24 ; 10 : 21).

On the other hand not a few texts imply that the *sacrifice* of Christ belongs to His high priesthood. Thus in 5 : 1 (cf. 8 : 3) it is said to be the business of *every* high priest to offer gifts and sacrifices. The High Priest Who became us, thus 7 : 27, in contrast with the Levitical high priests, once for all — as High Priest — offered up Himself. In 9 : 25 likewise the implication is that Christ as the heavenly High Priest, once offered up Himself. In 10 : 10 (cf. 10 : 11—14) the offering of the body of Christ is reckoned to the priesthood. These passages, however, though they speak of the offering as belonging to the priesthood, do not in each case refer to the offering of the cross. In some texts (cf. 8 : 3, 9 : 25) the reference is to the presentation of Christ's offering in heaven. In like manner the statement in 1 : 3 "having made purification of sins" may relate to the action of Christ on His entrance into Heaven. But there are other texts in which the reference to *Calvary* is equally clear. Thus in 10 : 10 "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" is a mode of speaking that points us to what happened on Calvary. Were the offering in heaven meant, the word "blood" or the more general term "Himself" would have been used, scarce-

ly the word "body", since in the Old Testament type the blood was carried into the holiest, not the body. The fact that according to 9 : 26 He was *manifested* to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and that in 9 : 28 Christ's offering is placed in parallel to the appointment unto men once to die, makes the reference to Calvary unquestionable. — The same thought that the death is reckoned as belonging to the priesthood of Christ, follows also from 10 : 20, where the dissolving of the flesh of Jesus is represented as the rending of the veil, and the dedicating of a new and living way into the Holiest. This dedicating of a way into the holiest is work of a high priest ; so that Christ, when His blood was shed and His flesh dissolved, performed a high priestly act. Christ is said (13 : 12) to have sanctified His people through His own blood. But it is the duty of a priest to sanctify his people. And this Christ did when He suffered without the gate.¹⁾

How now are these two modes of representation to be harmonized ? That they should be contradictory, we have no reason to suppose, especially not in the case of so careful a writer as the author of Hebrews proves himself to be. To his mind these must have been not two contradictory representations, but one consistent view. But how did he unite them ? It has been argued²⁾ that the apparent contradiction must be explained as follows : Christ's high priesthood *after the order of Melchizedek* did not begin until His entrance into heaven. Upon earth He was High Priest also, but — after the order of Aaron. But, as Dr. Bruce has stated in his book on Hebrews, "that is too crude a view of the matter."^{3,4)} The author expressly tells us, that to be priest after the order of Aaron means to be a descendant of Levi 7 : 5, 13, to have claim to the priesthood not because of personal qualifications, but by reason of one's genealogy. 7 : 5, 16. The defenders of this view need to be reminded that "it is evident that our Lord sprang out

1) Cf. Riehm. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 pp. 595—599.

2) So Hoffmann, Riehm, Bruce in Humiliation of Christ.

3) Bruce Hebrews p. 194.

4) Cf. also Hastings Bible Dictionary Vol. IV p. 98. Art. Priest. by J. Denney, Otto Schmitz : Die Opferanschauung des spaeteren Judentums p. 293, Holtzmann : N. T. Theol. II 336.

of Juda 7:14, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Nor can Christ in the bringing of a sacrifice be said to have performed an act only belonging to the Aaronic order. For as 5:1 (cf. 8:3) tells us, *every* High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, the Melchizedekian no less than the Aaronic.¹⁾ That Christ in His sacrificial death did not act as High Priest after the order of Aaron, follows from the consideration that selfsacrifice never was characteristic of that order. Moreover, the Aaronic order was not annulled after and by the death of Christ, so that the death must yet be reckoned to the old order. The disannulling occurred according to 7:11—14 the very moment another kind of Priest arose out of the tribe of Juda. And a Priest out of the tribe of Juda Christ always was, as well before as after His death. Therefore, since the Aaronic order was annulled the moment the Priest out of the tribe of Juda arose, then either Christ was not High Priest at all on earth, and the arising has reference to a later period, or Christ on earth was Melchizedek High Priest.

Further it cannot be pointed out what in the Melchizedek order was lacking in Christ when He was yet on earth. If as we have seen in the study of Chapter Seven, the essence of the Melchizedek order lies in its eternity-attribute, can Christ's priesthood on earth be said to fall short of that? His death did not cut short His priesthood, since that very death, also on the above theory, was a priestly act. In and through that death Christ was acting and remained High Priest. Exactly in that death was revealed that Christ had "the power of an indissoluble life" 7:16. Besides, that death was eternal in its efficacy 7:27. Again, Christ while on earth revealed Himself to be as regards His origin, His nature, the eternal, divine life He possessed, His destiny, an eternal High Priest, the very prototype of Melchizedek. Both as regards His personality and the value of His sacrifice He was eternal, and fulfilled on earth the requirements of the Melchizedek order and formed a contrast to the Aaronic order.

1) Cf. what has been said on Ch. IV.

Nor can Christ's priesthood on earth be separated as the above theory does, from His priestly activity in heaven. For just as in the Old Testament ritual, the slaying of the sacrifice and the presentation before the throne of Jehovah in the holy of holies was one continuous act, so also Christ's death and the presentation of His offering before the Father in heaven was one continuous act. Dr. Bruce, to overcome that difficulty, included the presentation in heaven under the Aaronic order.¹⁾ But how can an Aaronic high priest find himself offering in the heavenly tabernacle. Moreover, the transition from the Aaronic to the Melchizedek order is even there arbitrary. For the intercession and blessing, the only work left the Melchizedek High Priest, cannot be performed independently of the Aaronic order, but needs its sacrifice as the eternal basis of that intercession, so that even then what belongs to the Aaronic order is not annulled but perpetuated. The distinction between two orders to which Christ is said to have belonged successively does not remove the difficulties but multiplies them. It was this conviction no doubt, that led Dr. Bruce to abandon that theory in his more recent work on Hebrews.²⁾

Another theory does not go as far as to make Christ an High Priest after the order of Aaron, but substitutes the idea of "fulfilling" the order to that of belonging to it,³⁾ the former being fulfilled before His session at the right hand of God, the latter after that time. But this view places the two orders, the Aaronic and the Melchizedekian, in the same relation to Christ. He fulfills them both. But according to Hebrews, the relation which Christ sustained to these orders was by no means the same. In Christ, 7 : 11 tells us, another kind of Priest arose Who was after the order of Melchizedek and cannot be called after the order of Aaron. Christ's order is everywhere where it is mentioned said to be that of Melchizedek, and He is everywhere contrasted with the order of Aaron. We cannot attach the same meaning to the term "fulfill" when

1) In *Humiliation of Christ* Second ed. p. 284.

2) Cf. G. Vos : *Pr. Th. Rev.* 1907 pp. 599 ff. *Pr. Th. Rev.* 1916 pp. 39 ff. Bruce : *Hebrews* (1908) p. 194.

3) Cf. Wescott Note on 8 : 1 p. 229.

speaking of Christ's relation to the order of Aaron as when we say that Christ fulfilled the order of Melchizedek. For that would mean that Christ had fulfilled the requirements placed upon the priesthood of that order. This would require of our Lord, according to Hebrews, fleshly descent from Levi regardless of personality, to be law-appointed, to have an earthly carnal ministry, to officiate in an earthly temple, and to offer bulls and goats as sacrifices. These essential requirements for the priest of the Aaronic order Christ did not fulfill, but abrogated. And in the sense that Christ has fulfilled the Aaronic order He cannot be said to have fulfilled the order of Melchizedek. Christ indeed came to fulfill all that was typical of Him in the whole Old Testament economy, therefore also what was typical of Him in the Old Testament priesthood. But this He did as High Priest *after the order of Melchizedek*. Also the soteriological work of obtaining salvation, for as e.g. 5 : 8—10 shows, Christ as Melchizedek High Priest is "Author of eternal salvation." As Dr. Milligan has tersely stated it : "Strictly speaking, He does not fulfill both orders. He fulfills the lower because He is of the higher."¹)

Can we then reach a solution of the difficulty by saying with others, that Christ was a High Priest *in general* before His entrance to heaven, and thereupon became High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. This, however, no more solves the difficulty than the foregoing. For what sort of a high priest is a high priest in general ? He must be of some order. And the Old Testament knew of only two legitimate orders. Christ could not answer to the requirements of the Levitical order, hence the concern of the author (cf. e. g. 5 : 4—7) to point out that Christ was of the order of Melchizedek, to prove that He was no usurper, but had a rightful claim to the dignity of the high priesthood. Not being a High Priest after the order of Aaron, He could not be High Priest at all, unless He was of the order of Melchizedek.

A rather ingenious proposal is the one offered by Dr. Milligan. He argues as follows : Christ never was anything else than High

1) Cf. Milligan : The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord, p. 77. Cf. Calvin, Bengel, and Owen on Hebrews 7 : 11—15.

Priest after the order of Melchizedek. But he assumes as for himself a settled question, that this priesthood of Christ begins with His glorification.¹⁾ "But" says Dr. Milligan "of that glorification the death upon the cross was part." Not the Resurrection but the Crucifixion marks the beginning of our Lord's Glorification. He bases his theory upon a single passage in the gospel of John, (12 : 32), which he translates as follows : "And I, if I be lifted up on high *out of the earth*, will draw all men unto myself."²⁾ This way of representing the cross *as a glory*, characteristic of St. John, thus Dr. Milligan argues, and not St. Paul's way of regarding the cross of Christ "as humiliation rather than exaltation and as shame rather than glory" is also characteristic of Hebrews.³⁾ "The sacrifice of the cross falls thus within the sphere of a super-earthly or heavenly priesthood."⁴⁾

By the above briefly sketched process of reasoning Dr. Milligan hopes to harmonize the two apparently discordant representations of our Lord's work given in Hebrews. His view, however, though it avoids the serious objections decisive against the other views stated above, is burdened with peculiar difficulties of its own. That it is made to rest upon a single passage of scripture, is in itself not a fatal objection. But Dr. Milligan will have to admit that the text in question (John 12 : 32) is not one of the clearest passages of scripture. And to build a theory which makes the glorification of Christ begin with the crucifixion according to Hebrews, upon so uncertain a foundation is precarious. As for Dr. Milligan's interpretation of this passage that it represents the cross of Christ as in a sense belonging to His glorification, it deserves preference to the view which understands the lifting up in a literal sense. Our Lord could scarcely have meant that when He would be literally lifted up a few feet above the ground, He would then draw all men unto Him. An ideal significance must be attached to these words. And as such the message they bring is that Christ's glorifi-

1) Cf. Milligan : Ascension and heavenly High Priesthood of our Lord p. 79.

2) Cf. p. 78.

3) Cf. p. 80.

4) Cf. Milligan : Ascension p. 79).

cation indeed in a certain sense did not first begin with His resurrection and ascension, but with His crucifixion. However, the most that can be concluded from this passage is that the death of the cross, which is usually represented in scripture as belonging to the humiliation, also in a sense forms part of Christ's glorification, that humiliation and glorification here interpenetrate.¹⁾ The important question, however, is, does Hebrews view the crucifixion as part of the glorification? In any event the representation of Hebrews cannot be based on the passage in John. For the epistle to the Hebrews was certainly prior in time to the Gospel of John. The argument, taken from John 12 : 32 can only be, as in fact it is with Dr. Milligan, an argument from analogy. However, are Hebrews and the gospel of John 12 : 32 in this regard analogous? Does Hebrews, as Dr. Milligan contends, "regard the death of Christ even when he does not expressly say so, as a glory"? The death of Christ is to be sure regarded in its *aim and result* as glorious, but that is not what must be proved. The death in itself is never considered as a glory. And as far as aim and result are concerned, not only the death but the entire humiliation is by Hebrews regarded as being glorious.²⁾ Proving the death to be a glory in this respect is to prove what holds true of the entire humiliation and therefore would be proving too much and therefore nothing at all. As to the relation in which the cross of Christ stands to the glory of Christ we have a statement in chapter 2 : 9. There the glorification is represented as being *subsequent* to the death. If the phrase "for the suffering of death" be taken with the preceding statement, then the glorification *certainly* comes after the death. If it must be taken with the following statement : "crowned with honor and glory", then no less. For if the honor and glory are the crown given *on account of* the suffering of death, that death itself naturally falls outside, is prior to the glorification.³⁾ Furthermore, the beginning of Christ's glorification is conceived of as being

1). Cf. Bavinck : Gereformeerde Dogmatiek III p. 473.

2) Cf. Bruce, in Hastings Vol. II p. 330.

3) Cf. Wescott on 2 : 9.

simultaneous with the completion of the process of τελείωσις. But the death is regarded (cf. 5 : 7—10) as part of the τελείωσις of Christ. Moreover, the difficulty attaching to such texts as 5 : 7—10, 6 : 20, 7 : 26, where it is said of Christ that He was "called" and "became" High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, is not explained by Dr. Milligan's view. For wherever we may date the beginning of Christ's glorification, the "calling" and "becoming" (5 : 10, 6 : 20) have reference to a time when the death of the cross was already a thing of the past. In 5 : 10 it was after our Lord had been made perfect ; i. e. when the days of His flesh had already come to a close, and He had been saved *out of* death, that our Lord was "called of God an High Priest."¹) And in 6 : 20 the "becoming" marks the time when Christ as "Forerunner" entered within the veil of the heavenly tabernacle. Moreover, such passages in Hebrews that speak of Christ as a minister of the heavenly tabernacle, as a High Priest that is "separated from sinners" and "made higher than the heavens", do not find adequate explanation on Dr. Milligan's view. Christ indeed was a minister of the heavenly sanctuary already on the cross, because what was done there was done with reference to the heavenly sanctuary. However, not as this theory demands, as if Christ were then already superearthly, had already passed out of this world, but as performing work as heavenly High Priest in the outer court of this world. The local idea present in "separated from sinners" forbids our applying this statement already to Christ upon the cross. It could only be said of Him after He had passed out of this world, the home of sinners, into the metaphysical regions of heaven. Likewise Christ was not "made higher than the heavens" on the cross.

In order to a right understanding of the view of Hebrews, we must go not to John, but to Paul. Not a Johannean but a Pauline idea is reflected in Hebrews conception of Christ's priesthood.²)

1) Cf. Riegenbach.

2) Cf. G. Vos in Pr. Th. Rev. Oct. 1907 pp. 600—604 to whom I am indebted for the view I am about to state.

The believer's faith to Paul¹⁾ does not terminate upon the Redeemer upon the cross, but upon the exalted and glorified Christ. True the cross is not lost sight of, it always lies in the background, it lies at the basis of Christ's work in heaven, without which that work could not be carried on. But the faith none the less is made to rest upon the living, glorified Lord. He the Glorified sums up in Himself all the benefits of the cross. Of it the glorified state is the product and crown. Not to the hill of Golgotha where Christ no longer is, but to heaven Paul directs the believer, to his exalted Lord, to secure from Him the fruits of His work on earth, which He as exalted Lord now dispenses.

If now we translate that thought of Paul into priestly terminology, then precisely the representation of Hebrews will result. The High Priest Whom we need, to Whom the believer is then directed, will be specifically a *heavenly* High Priest, Who, summing up within Himself as perfected High Priest the fruits of His atoning work on earth, can now save by His intercession. The High Priest Who became us will then not be, any more than with Paul, a dying High Priest upon the cross, but an ever-living High Priest in heaven, raised above all hindrances to an effectual high priestly ministration 7 : 26—28. But as little as with Paul does this imply that the cross is lost sight of. The cross is "not only the indispensable presupposition of the ministry in glory, but the ministry in glory is the perpetuated eternalized proclamation of what the death of Christ meant."²⁾ Therefore Hebrews can at various times speak of the sacrifice of the cross as a high priestly work, while at the same time for all practical purposes *the* High Priest Which we need, will be represented as the glorified High Priest in heaven. If we keep in mind Paul's representation, which however is not peculiar to Paul alone, but characteristic of all the apostles, we will understand how Hebrews, although recognizing as he does the priestly nature of Christ's death, yet was under the necessity of laying emphasis upon the work of Christ *in heaven*,

1) Cf. Bavinck : Geref. Dogmatiek Vol. III pp. 475, 538, 545.

2) Cf. Vos. Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 601.

of representing Christ's priesthood as specifically a *heavenly* priesthood.

The reason why the author presents the truth this way will become still more clear if we stop to consider the author's apologetic aim. His externalistic readers could not be reconciled to a Saviour Who had passed from view into the region of the unseen. A glorified Saviour here upon earth that dwelt among men, would have meant much more to them. The Aaronic High Priest in his resplendant robes of office, walking amidst the glitter of an earthly temple, that worked out their atonement before their very eyes, appealed much more to them. The author points out that just what they objected to was the recommendation of this High Priest. To be effectual High Priest 7: 26—28, to be Priest at all 8: 3, Christ must be Priest in heaven. The entire contrast between earth and heaven, between the carnal ministers of the earthly tabernacle and the eternal Melchizedekian High Priest of the heavenly tabernacle serves the apologetical purpose of reconciling the readers to the necessity of Christ's retreat to heaven. Nothing less than heaven, the world of things absolute, things eternal, is necessary for an absolute, eternal High Priest, Who must officiate before God's throne.

If however with Paul, Hebrews strives to fix the faith of believers upon the exalted Saviour, the heavenly High Priest, how does he correlate with it the ministry of Christ on earth? That he considers it not merely as a preparation to, but also as a part of Christ's priesthood has been shown above.¹⁾ And that to his mind there was in his representation no contradiction, but one consistent view, we must accept. We cannot dismiss the question by saying the thought never presented itself to the mind of the careful and profound writer.²⁾ But as to how he did unite the two representations we cannot speak with absolute certainty. It is highly probable, however, that the thoughts suggested in the following contain the solution, which the author had in mind, since they flow directly out of his entire method of presentation. In the first place it is

1) Cf. pp. 61, 62.

2) Cf. Otto Schmitz: *Die Opferanschauung* p. 293.

clear that the author was dependant in his presentation of Christ's priesthood upon the Old Testament ritual . The priestly work of Christ, except for a few general statements, is compared, not to the work of the Levitical priests in general, but to that of the high priest on the great Day of Atonement. The priestly ministration of the high priest on that day was performed partly in the court and partly in the Holy of Holies. The slaying of the sacrifice, which on other occasions, as we have reason to believe, was performed not by the priest but by the offerer, on the Day of Atonement was according, to the prescription of the law specifically an act of the high priest . cf. Leviticus 16 : 15. This act of slaying the sacrifice was performed outside the tabernacle *in the court*. In analogy to this, the process of atonement by Christ, which the author sees foreshadowed in the Atonement Day ritual, must therefore have been similar to that which typified it. Christ's work as High Priest will then naturally be considered as having been performed partly in the court ; i.e. on earth, and partly in the Holy of Holies ; i.e. heaven. The sacrifice He brought on Calvary will then be the part of His priestly ministration, which is performed in the court. But as little as the slaying of the sacrifice made the high priest a minister of the court, as little did Christ become by His selfsacrifice on Golgotha a High Priest of this earth. The Old Testament high priest had a ministry that belonged specifically to the holy of holies. So also Hebrews could attribute to Christ a priestly ministry relating to the heavenly Holy of Holies, without thereby denying the priestly nature of His sacrifice on earth.

A second consideration makes this solution the more probable. The continual contrast drawn between the heavenly, spiritual, eternal world and this earthly, carnal, temporal sphere must attract everyone who makes a study of Hebrews. But to the author this eternal world projects itself into our temporal sphere on earth. Even of believers it is said that they are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the spirits of just men made perfect etc. 12 : 22, 24. They are therefore in touch with the heavenly, eternal realities. Is it already true of believers that they live and act as citizens of the heavenly

world, far more is it true of our Lord. Though He walked on earth, He carried heaven within Himself. "In virtue of His origin, nature and destiny He continued to form a part of the celestial order of things."¹) What Christ did on earth was therefore determined in its nature rather by what our Lord was than by the place where He did it. Hence the sacrifice performed once for all, although it was brought in a temporal sphere, could yet have an eternal efficacy. The sacrifice of the cross although performed on earth, still in its intrinsic nature was a heavenly act. It was brought by One Who carried the heavenly world in Himself ; it was eternal in its effect ; it was done with reference to the heavenly tabernacle ; it was offered through eternal spirit. Thus the sacrifice of Golgotha fits in very well with a priesthood which is represented as heavenly and eternal.

From the above considerations it is clear how the author can picture Christ's priesthood as a priesthood of heaven, without his considering the work on earth as not being part of it. Christ's high priesthood ; i.e. His Melchizedek high priesthood did not *begin* to the mind of the author with His entrance to heaven, but it is then that that high priesthood *became clear*.²) It was then that Christ became the *perfectly-formed* High Priest. The argument of Dr. Milligan "that the distinction between the incompleteness and completeness cannot be maintained"³) cannot be decisive against the above theory. This it would perhaps be if the incompleteness concerned one or more of the essential elements belonging to that priesthood and its work. But already on earth both the High Priest and His sacrificial work are with propriety characterized by the author as eternal, heavenly. The eternity attribute, the essential element of the Melchizedek high priest, was present in Him also on earth. But the incompleteness and completeness concern the bringing to *τελείωσις*, the final state of perfection of what even on earth was wholly present in germ, of what was potentially perfect. Thus the priestly obedience unto death was present in potentia before death,

1) Cf. Vos in Pr. Th. Rev. Oct. 1907 p. 604.

2) Cf. Bavinck : Geref. Dogmatiek Vol. III 545.

3) Cf. Milligan : Ascension etc. p. 81.

but was only perfected when He had passed out of this earth. He was King on earth (cf. John 18 : 37). but again He became so after His ascension. He had a full sympathy already on earth, but became sympathetic High Priest after His earthly life was ended. He was Melchizedek High Priest on earth, and became so at His entrance to heaven. It is as Holtzmann has remarked¹⁾ that just as the eternal Son proved His Sonship in Paul (Romans 1 : 4) by the resurrection from the dead, so Christ's priesthood, although it has its roots not merely in time, but already back in eternity, first was "proclaimed" after He had qualified Himself for it by His life in earth. It was then that His eternal Melchizedek high priesthood budded into full flower.²⁾

The texts that at first sight do not seem to conform to the above theory, by closer observation will be found to be in no way contradictory. Thus when the author in 2 : 17 says that it behoved Christ to be made like His brethren "in all things", including death, He does not mean that not until that death was a thing of the past, could Christ be High Priest, but the purpose for which He became like unto us ; i.e. to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, was obtained *in the fact that* He was like us in all things, also in His death.³⁾ Again when in 8 : 4 we read that if Christ "were on earth He should not be a Priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law," it is not the intention of the author to deny that Christ could do any high priestly work on earth. He is speaking to the readers long after Christ had ascended up to heaven. What he means to say is, if Christ were *at that time* still on earth, then that would indicate that His ministry as a whole would be performed on this earth, belonged in its inner nature to this earth. But then Christ could not be a High Priest at all, seeing that the priesthood of earth belongs to the Aaronic order, and a ministry earthly in character would be infringing on their rights. But Christ's priesthood was not an earthly one, not when His sacrifice was brought, for it had reference to the heavenly

1) Cf. N. T. Theol. II p. 336.

2) Cf. Riehm p. 479 Note. Davidson ; Note on Priesthood of Christ p. 152).

3) Cf. Riehm p. 480 Riegenbach, Delitzsch.

tabernacle, and Christ was then as well as now a heavenly, eternal High Priest.

Christ's high priesthood ; i.e. His heavenly high priesthood, began therefore according to Hebrews already with His sacrifice upon the cross. This is today admitted by a broad circle of commentators, although, as seen above, they may differ upon the question as to what relation this priestly work sustains to His high priesthood in heaven. But can we date the beginning of Christ's priesthood still farther back and include perhaps the whole of our Lord's earthly life in it from the very incarnation on ? It has been argued from 5 : 9 that the life of suffering must also be included in the high priestly work. The "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" are of the nature of sacrifices, since it is said that they were "offered up." However, the word προσφέρειν does not always convey a sacrificial idea. It may mean, as it does in this case, the mere bringing to God of prayers. And if we press the idea and maintain that the "offering up" positively gives to the prayers and supplications the significance of "sacrifices", then they are sacrifices in no other sense than our prayers can be so called. At all events, to them is ascribed no atoning significance. Moreover, Christ's priestly sacrifice is elsewhere spoken of as a *single* sacrifice, as having been brought once for all. (Cf. 7 : 26—28). The thought of more atoning sacrifices than one is foreign to the author. But then it might be argued that the whole life of suffering of Christ, culminating in His death, is conceived of as a perpetual dying, as one grand single sacrifice. And is it not true that the whole suffering life of Christ was vicarious in its nature ? The apostle Paul knows of such a sacrifice. In Philippians 2 : 8 he says that Christ "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Nowhere, however, does Hebrews speak of Christ's life on earth as being part of His priestly offering. This does not imply that he would deny the atoning value of that life. But the author was bound in his presentation of the truth to the Old Testament ritual. The slaying of the sacrifice by the high priest and the presenting of the blood in the holiest were the shadows, of which the author must point out the substance in the death and subsequent entrance to

the heavenly Holiest of the New Testament High Priest. Accordingly, the sacrifice of Christ is not represented as a process continued throughout His life, but as a well-defined transaction. The tenses are always aorist or perfect tenses, never the imperfect. Two passages, it would seem, might be conceived as hinting that the author thought of Christ's entire life on earth as included in His priestly ministry. In 10 : 7 the New Testament High Priest is represented as saying : "Lo, I come to do thy will, o God." The will here referred to is not the will of God in general, as if by the mere performing of God's will throughout life, that life of Christ became the high priestly function of Christ. The will meant is specifically the will to die.¹⁾ But on the other hand it must be admitted that the *act* of coming to do God's will, hence the act of incarnation, is represented as already a priestly act on the part of Christ. — Again in 10 : 5 the statement "a body Thou hast prepared Me" does not make the incarnation the starting-point of Christ's priesthood, the essential part of which would then not be sacrifice but obedience to God's will in general, but in that body Christ had received an organ, whereby He could fulfill God's *will to die*. The life of Christ up to the cross is represented not so much as a part of the priesthood itself, but rather as the necessary preparation for that priesthood.

This, however, must not be interpreted as meaning that Christ was not High Priest before His incarnation. The possibility of His being High Priest before coming in the flesh already follows from the consideration that He is High Priest according to both natures, the divine and the human. As Hebrews 10 : 7 teaches, His very coming in the flesh is to be conceived of as a high priestly act. *Jesus Christ* is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Hebrews 13 : 8. Already back in eternity in the eternal council of peace Christ was appointed to His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. Cf. Ps. 2 : 7 ; 132 : 17 ; Isa. 42 : 1 43 : 10 ; Mt. 12 : 18 ; Lk. 24 : 26 ; Acts 2 : 23 ; 4 : 28 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 20 ; Rev. 13 : 8. From the time of His appointment to office, hence from eternity, must

1) Cf. Discussion of this text on Ch. VIII.

be dated the high priesthood of Christ. Against this cannot be argued that in like manner we could date the offices of Moses and Aaron etc. from eternity. For these existed only in idea in the eternal Council of Peace, whereas Christ, the divine Son, existed from all eternity. Moreover, Christ was one of the Parties to that council. The appointment to office was not made without the coöperation of Christ, so that He was a mere passive Object. He was active and took upon Himself to carry out that for which He was appointed. From eternity Christ, the eternal Melchizedek High Priest, is the Surety of an eternal covenant. Heb. 7 : 22. The functions of His office Christ did not first exercise after His incarnation, but immediately after the fall. Never since the time of our first parents has there in reality been any other Mediator between God and man than Jesus Christ. The Old Testament saints as well as we, had to be saved through this High Priest. Cf. Jn. 14 : 6 ; Acts 4 : 12 ; I Tim. 2 : 5 ; Heb. 11 : 40.¹⁾ The entire work of redemption which in the eternal Council of Peace Christ was appointed to perform, not only that which was wrought since the incarnation, but as well that which was preparatory to it during the period of the Old Testament, is work of the one Mediator Jesus Christ. Cf. I Jn. 1 : 1. The Levitical priests were not only types of Christ, but also the official organs through which Christ, the one eternal High Priest, executed His priestly office during the period of the old covenant. They were the representatives of the great Antitype. Their official authority they derived from the Person of Him, Whose coming they as shadows had to prophesy. Moses, Aaron, and all the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament were types, not merely of what Christ was once to be, after the incarnation, but of what He is from eternity and ever shall be. Heb. 3 : 6 ; 5 : 5 ; 13 : 8 ;. Christ exercised His official functions also during the Old Testament period as is clear from such passages of Scripture as Jn. 8 : 56 ; I Cor. 10 : 4 ; I Pet. 1 : 11 ; 3 : 19²⁾

1) Cf. on Heb. 11 : 40 chapter X.

2) Cf. Bavinck : Gereformeerde Dogmatiek 1910 III p. 222 ; 399 f. 427.

VII.

THE PLACE WHERE THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIEST MINISTERS.

We now come to a study of the λειτουργία of the heavenly High Priest. Heaven is the place, where this ministry is said to be performed. 9 : 24. Just as the earthly high priest, after having slain the sacrificial animal in the court, entered into the holy of holies, his specific place of ministry ; likewise this High Priest, after shedding His blood in the court of this earth, entered the heavenly Holy of Holies as His specific place of ministry 9 : 11, 12.

Of this tabernacle the one in the wilderness was the example and shadow. Moses was admonished of God (8 : 5), when he was about to make the tabernacle : "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee on the mount." Cf. 9 : 23. However, we must not by the parallelism of the type be led to a stark realistic conception, as if of every piece of furniture of the tabernacle in the wilderness, there exists a corresponding prototype in the heavenly tabernacle. No literal mercy-seat, no altar of incense, no candlestick, nor showbread, nor ark is spoken of in connection with the heavenly tabernacle. These articles (cf. 9 : 2—5) are in all probability shadows, not of articles to be found in the heavenly tabernacle, but of heavenly relations and spiritual realities. Any literal interpretation of these types involves itself in hopeless difficulties.

On the other hand, however, this much seems clear, that to Hebrews the heavenly tabernacle is a definite locality distinct from this earth. That the author represents heaven as a place and not as a mere concept expressing heavenly relations and truths, cannot

be gainsaid. In 8 : 4 we read that if Christ "were on earth, He should not be a Priest." In contrast He is spoken of (8 : 2) as not on earth, but as "a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." The sanctuary in which He ministers is therefore conceived of as a locality distinct from this earth. Just as the Old Testament high priest passed through an earthly tabernacle, the holy place, to enter the holy of holies ; so Christ 9 : 11, 12 by a tabernacle, only a greater and more perfect one, entered into the Holy of Holies. The heavenly tabernacle is therefore indeed a locality, for it is said that He passed through it to enter the Holiest. Not only is this tabernacle distinct from this earth, but also from the material heavens. Of these Hebrews also makes mention (cf. 1 : 10, 12 : 26). However, the heavenly tabernacle cannot either wholly or in part be identified with these material heavens. For the heavenly tabernacle is "not of this creation" 9 : 12. By this is not meant that it is an uncreated tabernacle. For, it is pitched by the Lord, not by man. Unlike the Mosaic tabernacle it is not made with human hands, or more broadly stated, it is not of this visible creation. 9 : 11. It is the invisible region of heaven itself, into which Christ entered to appear in the presence of God for us. 9 : 24.¹⁾

An ancient and still widespread view holds that the greater and more perfect tabernacle is Christ's body.²⁾ Though the view has much that commends it, a fatal objection to it seems to be given in 9 : 11, where of this more perfect tabernacle it is said, that it is not of this creation. A modification of this view advanced by Dr. Wescott is that *the church* as body of Christ is to be understood by this tabernacle. However, since the Holiest of all, and as well the tabernacle through which He passed, are represented as being definite places, the local idea present in them, it seems to me, makes this view untenable. And what is more, though there is a profound truth in the church's being Christ's body and as such His tabernacle, yet such thoughts of a *mystical* relation between Christ and

1) Cf. further for idea of locality 4 : 14, 7 : 26. Also Riehm, Delitzsch, Riggenbach.

2) Held in a modified form by Hofmann.

the believer, elsewhere made much of¹⁾ is hardly to be sought in this epistle, wherein religion is conceived of as a covenant, and the *conscious exercise* of Christian intercourse with God is emphasized. (Cf. Davidson p. 201-203).

That which corresponds to the holy of holies in the earthly sanctuary (9 : 3, 9 : 12), the Ἁγία Ἁγίων the place of God's especial presence, the abode proper of God, lies beyond the visible heavens and the heavenly tabernacle, for (4 : 14—16, 7 : 26, 9 : 11) it is said that the New Testament High Priest passed through these to approach the throne of God. The heavens through which He passed are distinguished from the heavens in which He sat down. 8 : 1. There must therefore be a place, transcending not only the visible universe, but the heavenly tabernacle as well, where the glory of God's Being reveals Itself to the creature as in no other place. To this heavenly Holy of Holies, the place of God's especial revelation to His creature, where the throne of the Ruler of the Universe is, thither the New Testament High Priest is represented as having gone with His offering. 9 : 11, 12, 6 : 19.

But though there is a place, where God dwells in an especial manner, transcending even the very heavenly tabernacle, yet it is less clear from Hebrews, whether this is to be thought of as divided from that tabernacle as was the holy of holies from the holy place in the earthly tabernacle. As Dr. Davidson has stated it :²⁾ "The holy place below existed because of the imperfection of the first covenant and its service, of which it was the emblem (9 : 8, 9) ; but as perfection comes through the ministry of the true tabernacle, there seems no place for a division, which is still the type of imperfection." It is true, Christ's flesh (10 : 20) is represented as a veil, implying that there existed before Christ's death that which hid Jehovah's Presence from view for the worshipper. But then Christ's flesh is a veil rent, so that whatever division there had existed for us between a Holy Place and the Holy of Holies is abolished by Christ. When Christ entered in within the veil, He entered as *Forerunner* (6 : 19, 20), behind Whom the curtain does

1) Cf. The letters of Paul.

2) Cf. Davidson on 9 : 11.

not drop to separate us from this most Sacred Place, but Whom we follow. Believers can now be admonished 4 : 16 "to come boldly to the throne of grace." Now in a sense the entire heavenly tabernacle is the Holy of Holies, inasmuch as it is filled with the glorious Presence of God, and the general assembly of the church of the Firstborn (12 : 22) as well as their angels in heaven always behold the Face of the Father (Mt. 18 : 10) . According to Hebrews, this heavenly world even projects itself upon earth and includes among its citizens all believers, so that of them it can be said (12 : 22, 23) that they "are come unto Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . . and to God the Judge of all."

Bound up with the idea of locality ascribed to this heavenly tabernacle, is that of heavenly relations. Heaven is to Hebrews the region of *realities* in contrast with this world as the region of the *phenomenal*. Heaven is "the veritable (ἀληθινός) tabernacle" 8 : 1, 9 : 24, while the earthly tabernacle is only pattern and shadow. 8 : 5. When the author says (9 : 24) that God dwells in the Holy Place not made with hands, but in heaven itself, the author makes an attempt to express the idea that God transcends all creaturely worlds and inhabits eternity, the realm of things absolute. And when in order to approach His throne to bring His sacrifice, it is said of Christ that He was raised "higher than the heavens" 7 : 26, it means that Christ's sacrifice is brought into the closest possible relation to God, and is an *absolute* atonement, that by such as it was Christ obtained eternal redemption. And when Christ is said to be seated at the right hand of Majesty 8 : 1, it means that He has entered into the closest possible communion with God and embodies as high priestly Representative of His people there, an *eternal* covenant. And when men are represented as having come to Mount Sion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to God 12 : 22, 23, it implies that they have been placed in touch with eternal realities , that in Christianity as the final religion the goal of religion is obtained, and that the absolute condition of things is about to be realized. Cf. 12 : 22—28.¹⁾ But after we have said this much

1) Cf. Davidson. Also Riehm, Bruce, Delitzsch.

about the place, where Christ is exercising His high priestly functions, statements which Hebrews justifies us in making, it remains true of this eternal region, that it is in its strictest sense incomprehensible. And how could it be otherwise! For that which is finite cannot comprehend the infinite.

VIII.

THE OFFERING WHICH THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIEST BROUGHT.

The offering which Christ brought, finds its foreshadowing chiefly in the Sinoffering of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Not exclusively however. Also with other offerings the offering of Christ is compared. Thus in 9 : 13 besides the Atonement Day sacrifices, mention is made of the ashes of the red heifer. This was a sacrifice ordained by the law to remove uncleanness through accidental contact with a dead body. It is there mentioned because with the Atonement Day sacrifice it had this in common, that both were ordained to remove uncleanness from the *entire congregation*.¹⁾ Likewise in 10 : 5ff. various kinds of sacrifices are summed up. However, only in a citation and then only with reference to the Old Testament ritual. No direct comparison of them is made with the sacrifice of Christ. Some²⁾ see in 9 : 15—17 a reference to the covenant sacrifice. But, as Dr. Bruce remarks, in that case Christ would have to play many parts, being at once Testator, Mediator, Priest, Victim, God, Moses, Young Men and Sacrifices all in one. In 13 : 11 ff. finally, there is a comparison made between the burning without the camp of the bodies whose blood was brought into the sanctuary, and the suffering of Jesus without the gate. However, all these references are scarcely more than incidental. They do not control the thought of Hebrews, but are introduced merely to illustrate a single point. The comparison which is

1) Cf. Numbers 19. Also Bruce, Delitzsch.

2) So Wescott.

dominant in Hebrews is the one between the sacrifice of the high priest on the Day of Atonement and the sacrifice of Christ. And this is very properly so. For the entire sacrificial cultus found its culmination in the annual sacrifice of that day. That sacrifice was not, as some have thought,¹⁾ supplementary to the other expiatory sacrifices. It was rather intended to keep alive, as Hebrews 10 : 1—3 points out, in the minds of the people the consciousness, that all the sacrifices of the preceding year were in themselves ineffectual, were only of a provisional nature, "shadows of good things to come." "All the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," though these had been atoned for in ordinary sacrifices by lower priests, were then confessed over the head of the live goat by the high priest. cf. Lev. 16 : 21.²⁾ The imperfections of all the ceremonial expiatory offerings were by that act placed in bold relief. Now just as the high priest, in whom we have not a specific order of priest alongside of others, but the culmination of the whole Old Testament priesthood, is contrasted in Hebrews to the one New Testament High Priest, so also the Atonement Day sacrifice, in itself not a specific kind of sacrifice alongside of others, but rather the culminating act of the whole sacrificial system, is contrasted with the "one sacrifice for sins forever" brought by the heavenly High Priest. Taken in its widest scope, as this contrast implies, the heavenly High Priest's sacrifice is the counterpart of the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament. (cf. 10 : 11, 12 ; 9 : 23).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest as the representative of the entire congregation of Israel, slew with his own hand the sacrificial animal, in the court of the tabernacle. He then entered into the most holy place with the blood to sprinkle it upon and before the Capporeth or Mercy-seat.³⁾ The purpose of this sacrifice was to bring about atonement for the people's sins. 9 : 7 ; 10 : 1. Likewise Christ, when He had suffered the death of the cross, entered the most Holy Place of the heavenly tabernacle with His

1) So Keil. But cf. Delitzsch.

2) Cf. Perowne p. 23.

3) For a detailed discussion of the ritual of this day cf. e. g. Delitzsch p. 749 ff.

blood. His action like that of the Old Testament high priest, purposed to bring about atonement for His people's sins. 10 : 12, 14 ; 9 : 14.

The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, as well as the sacrifice of Christ which it typified, was a complex act, being performed partly in the court and partly in the most holy place. Neither of these parts was complete in itself. Together they formed one complete whole. As in all expiatory sacrifices, both the slaying of the animal and the presentation of the blood were indispensable to bring about atonement. Not without blood 9 : 7, which he obtained by slaying the animal, could the high priest enter the second tabernacle. (cf. 9 : 7, 10 : 4 ; 9 : 12). The ritual of the Atonement Day specifically enjoined, that the high priest *with his own hand* slay the sacrificial animal and by the blood thus obtained make entrance for himself into the most holy place. (Cf. Lev. 16 : 15 Hebrews 9 : 13.) On the other hand, however, the presentation of the blood was equally indispensable. If the animal were merely slaughtered, no atonement would have been brought about. The sprinkling or the application of the blood in the tabernacle was absolutely required. (9 : 21, 22). Hebrews lays down the principle, that "without the shedding of blood" which as the context demands at least includes the sprinkling in the tabernacle, "there is no remission."

Likewise in the case of Christ, both the giving of Himself in death and the Selfpresentation in heaven, were necessary parts of His atoning sacrifice. The death of Christ is contemplated in Hebrews not merely as a preparation to, but as an essential part of His priesthood.¹⁾ Hebrews knows nothing of a sacrifice that does not involve suffering and death as an essential element. (9 : 26—28 ; 10 : 10).²⁾ But on the other hand the thought is as explicitly stated that the presentation in heaven forms part of the offering of Christ. 9 : 25.³⁾

Both parts of Christ's sacrifice are therefore deemed indispensable to bring about atonement. But which, we may ask, is the more

1) Cf. pp. 61, 62.

2) Cf. Hastings Bible Dictionary : Art. Sacrifice.

3) See further on this topic pp. 127 ff.

important ? Must the stress be laid upon what He did on Calvary, or is that death in itself of minor importance, being conceived of merely, to state it in sacrificial language, as a means of procuring the blood ; so that the all-important part of the sacrifice is the selfpresentation in heaven of the life that passed through death ? A final answer to this question cannot be given until we shall have enquired into the theory of atonement held by Hebrews. For the answer to this question hangs closely together with what we believe the author's view of atonement to be. However, even here, without deciding between the two main theories¹⁾ of Atonement, it is possible to approximate the correct answer. Not a few present day commentators show a tendency to minimize the importance of the death of Christ, and to lay all stress upon the Selfpresentation of Christ in the heavenly most Holy Place. The presentation of the blood is held to be the all-important factor, the offering to God the symbol of a consecrated life. But even on the symbolic theory of sacrifice, is the death of Christ as unimportant an element of His offering as these commentators make it to be ? Evidently not. For what gave value to Christ's sacrifice even on that theory, what made it acceptable in the sight of God, was the spirit in which it was brought. And in order to learn what that spirit was, we must go not to Christ in heaven, but to Him *on the cross*. It was in that death, that the spirit of a life wholly consecrated to God, found its culminating expression. (Cf. Ephesians 5 : 2). To speak with Dr. Bruce²⁾ "the death of Christ is indeed the cardinal fact, whatever theory we may adopt as to the nature of the atonement ; whether e.g. we regard the victim in sacrifice as a substitute for the offerer, bearing the penalty of his sin, or with Baehr and others, as the symbol of his own selfdevotion, the blood presented to God representing a pure life and pledging the offerer to a life of self-consecration. On either view applied to Christ, His death was of vital importance ; obviously if He bore the penalty of our sin, not less obviously if His death was but the consummation of a life

1) The Penal Substitution and the Symbolic.

2) Cf. Hebrews p. 347.

of self-sacrifice, wherein He is the pattern to all His followers.”¹⁾

But if the death on either theory ought to be the cardinal fact, how is this to be harmonized with the other truth, that the author is constantly laying emphasis upon the priesthood of Christ *in heaven*? Should he not have allotted far more space to the discussion of that death than he did? In reply, let it be reminded that much of what Hebrews has to say of Christ’s activity in heaven, relates to the grand work of intercession or of blessing, which taken strictly is not part of the offering of Christ but is based upon it. And if we compare the passages wherein the Selfpresentation in heaven is spoken of, with those that speak of that offering as connected with the death on the cross, then it can scarcely be maintained that by the author of Hebrews the selfpresentation is emphasized more than the death. The importance attached to the death as a means to our atonement in such passages as 9 : 14 (through eternal spirit) ; 9 : 15 (where the death is represented as the condition of redemption) ; 9 : 28 (Christ bearing on the cross the sins of the many) ; 10 : 10 (sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ) ; 13 : 12 (where the power of Jesus to sanctify His people through His blood is derived from His having suffered without the gate), rather would tend to prove that to Hebrews indeed the death was the cardinal fact in Christ’s offering. That the author nevertheless fixes our gaze chiefly upon our High Priest in heaven in no way argues against this. For the work of Christ in heaven, — His Selfpresentation, and His intercessory activity as well — is the rendering effective of Christ’s high priestly work on earth.²⁾

Now that we have studied the sacrifice of Christ from the point of view of the parts wherein it consisted, and have noted in a preliminary way the relative importance of these parts, let us seek to determine the precise what of Christ’s sacrifice, or wherein the offering brought on Calvary and in heaven consisted. That offer-

1) Bruce : Hebrews p. 347.

2) Cf. Holzmann : N. T. Theol. II p. 343. A. Seeberg : Die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Christi im Hebräerbrief p. 30. Cf. also what has been said Chapt. VI and on the work in heaven Ch. XII.

ing is variously designated in various places. In 8 : 3 and 9 : 23 the author chooses to leave it indefinite. In 9 : 23 he even speaks of "sacrifices" in the plural. He did not mean to indicate thereby that Christ has brought more than one sacrifice. For Hebrews is explicit in stating that the new covenant has only one sacrifice of eternal validity offered once for all. cf. 7 : 27 ; 9 : 26 ; 27 ; 10 : 12. The plural is rather used for the sake of the parallelism with the sacrifices wherewith the earthly tabernacle and its furniture were sprinkled.

That which Christ offered to God, is generally and most broadly described as *Himself* *ἑαυτὸν* cf. 7 : 27 ; 9 : 14 ; 25, 28. This one sacrifice, "Himself", makes our Lord as over against the Levitical order the ideal High Priest. For in the ideal High Priest, priest and sacrifice must be one. For it is exactly the business of a high priest to "represent men in things pertaining to God." 5 : 1. The offerings of creaturely devotion which man, by nature a priest, ought to bring but because of sin cannot, the high priest must bring for him. And secondly the atonement for sins committed which man must make but cannot, the high priest must make for him. But exactly that atonement, which involved the death of this representative of sinful man (9 : 22, 9 : 26—28), the Levitical priest could not bring. For not to speak of the impediment that lay in the high priest's own sinfulness, such selfsacrifice involved the death of the high priest and meant nothing less than the cessation of his high priestly activity. He could not *complete* his offering in the holy of holies, since he had no indissoluble life. 7 : 16. Nor could he make intercession on the basis of his offering. A brute beast therefore had to be taken to fulfill the part of the atonement which the high priest could not take upon himself. In the Levitical sacrifices, therefore, there was a double representation, a dualism. The high priest represented his people only insofar as he presented to God the offering for sin. The animal represented the people insofar as the animal's life it was, that was given in death as a sinoffering. This substitution of a brute beast in the Levitical sacrifices made atonement already an impossibility. 10 : 4. For absolute condition of atonement is that he who under-

takes as high priestly representative to atone for man's sins, must himself suffer what man whom he is to represent ought to have suffered. — But as little as the high priest, could the sacrificial animal be a representative of the sinful offerer. An animal cannot represent man. Neither could it stand in an ethical relation to the offerer in whose stead it was being sacrificed. It could not consciously espouse his cause, take upon itself his sins, or undertake to die for him. It had no knowledge whatsoever of what the sacrifice meant, of why it was being slaughtered. It was entirely passive. All thought of consciously or willingly dying, of yielding its life as a sacrifice to God in the place of the offerer, was out of the question. Such a sacrifice, standing outside of all ethical relation to the offerer or to the will of God, could not be the ideal sacrifice, could not have value as an atonement for man's sins. It is because of the absence of the ethical in those sacrifices that the author in 10 : 1—4 speaks of their unprofitableness, and points to the word of prophecy as foretelling (10 : 5—10) the offering of the body of Jesus Christ which, because of the ethical content, the obedience to the will of God expressed in it, was to have real atoning value.

Over against the unprofitable offerings of the Levitical priests, the author places the perfect offering of Christ. In Him priest and sacrifice are, as they ought to be, one. His offering was "*Himself*"¹⁾ As the true High Priest He indeed stood in the room of sinful man, made man's cause truly His own, and undertook to fulfill for sinful man what the latter could not do. Whereas man as priest owed his life to his Creator, and because of sin had to yield that life in death as an atonement 9 : 22, this High Priest by yielding His own life to God and not transferring a part of His responsibility to an animal, fulfilled the requirements of an ideal high priest. As a true sacrifice He brought not bulls and goats, but as man whom he represented would have had to do, He brought Himself. His sacrifice could therefore come into recognition by God as a proper offering for sinful man. The more because, as will be indicated presently, it fulfilled the ethical requirements placed upon a true atoning sacrifice.

1) Cf. Denney : Art. Priest, in Hastings Bible Dictionary IV p. 99.

This sacrifice, "Himself", it was that Christ brought both on Calvary (9 : 28) and in heaven (9 : 25). It is important to observe that it was the *entire Self* that constitutes the offering of Christ. All efforts to limit this offering either to His bodily sufferings or to the spirit of obedience revealed by Christ in His Self-sacrifice, fail to do justice to the representation of Hebrews. Both the bodily sufferings (9 : 26—28) and the spirit which was revealed in the surrender of Christ (9 : 14 ; 10 : 10) are to the mind of the author indispensable elements of Christ's sacrifice. Even the divinity of Christ, though it cannot be said to be that which Christ offered up to the Father, forms a most vital contribution to that sacrifice, without which it could not have been a perfect atonement offering.

It has been maintained on the basis of 10 : 10, that the offering which Christ presented to God was His body. But this can never be a full designation of the offering of Christ. The analogy found in Hebrews between the sacrifice of Christ and those of the Levitical order already makes this an impossibility. The slaying of the body was indeed an essential element, but the body was not carried into the holy of holies as an offering to God, as it ought to have been if the essence of the sacrifice consisted in that. The typology of the Old Testament ritual, which controls the author's method of representation, argues against our thinking of the body of Christ as that which Christ offered up to God in heaven. Only with regard to the death on Calvary can it be said that Christ offered up *His body*. This already proves that the statement in 10 : 10 is a partial designation of the offering and views it not in its fulness, but only from a certain point of view. For whatever sums up in itself the essence of Christ's sacrifice, must be that to which, as well in the presentation in heaven as on Calvary, God gave recognition as being an atonement for sins. The thought of Bleek, Kurtz, and others that Christ offered His body to God in heaven seems unfounded. Not only does the analogy with the Old Testament ritual argue against it, but how would that body then have to be conceived? As a corpse? But that is contrary to fact. As Christ's glorified body? If the essence of Christ's sacrifice consisted in Christ's glorified body, we should expect that the author would have made

much more of the resurrection of Christ, whereas the parallel to the Old Testament ritual forbade his even taking the resurrection into account as an element in his view. He passes immediately, as he must, from the death to the presentation in heaven, and speaks of the resurrection only once, in the *practical* portion of the epistle, and then only in an incidental manner. cf. 13 : 20. The reason why the author in 10 : 10 speaks of the body as that which Christ offered, is for the sake of the parallel with the citation taken from Ps. 40 : 6—8, which the author had just quoted. The oracle had foretold that the Messiah would be given a body as an organ for performing God's will in suffering. In accordance therewith the author says we are sanctified by the sacrifice of that body, the organ whereby He fulfilled God's will in suffering. In view of the emphasis laid in the context upon obedience to God's will as an essential element in an acceptable sacrifice, nothing could be more erroneous than the assertion that to the author the body of Christ comprised the entire substance of His offering.

A better view of the essence of this High Priest's offering we shall gain, if we take as our starting point the Levitical offerings. Whereas to Hebrews there is an analogy between the two, we can surmise that what there forms the essence of the offering will also be conceived of as such in the case of Christ's offering. The classical text that states what was the essence of the Old Testament offerings, is Lev. 17 : 11. There we read : "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." From this passage we learn, that blood is the means of atonement, the essence of the Levitical sacrifices. The same view is held by the author of Hebrews. Blood to him was the atoning factor in the Levitical sacrifices. Cf. 9 : 7, 21, 22, 25 ; 13 : 11. Blood to him also atoned in the case of Christ's offering. This follows from a comparison of 9 : 23 with 9 : 21, 22, and 13 : 12 with 13 : 11. It is however important to observe that nowhere it is explicitly stated, that blood is that which Christ offered to the Father. On the contrary there is a conscious avoidance of any such statement. In 9 : 23 and 9 : 25, for example, where as counterpart of the blood

offered by the Levitical high priest we should expect mention of the *blood* of Christ, we find an intentional substitution of the more general objects "better sacrifices" and "Himself". There is a reason for this. Hebrews evidently wishes, by avoiding any direct assertion that the blood of Christ is that which was offered, to safeguard against the readers' being led by their externalism to think that the blood of Christ was a means of atonement in a stark realistic sense. The blood of our Lord, chemically considered, could not be advanced as an atonement for sin. As a chemical compound there is no doubt not very much difference between the blood of a human being and of an animal. So that in a realistic sense it would be as impossible for the blood of Christ as for that of bulls and goats to take away sins. There was a great danger — which this epistle by its careful expression seeks to avoid — that the externalistic readers, grown accustomed no doubt by the sight of the many bloody sacrifices at Jerusalem, to view the blood in the Levitical sacrifices as in itself a means of atonement, apart from ethical considerations, would form a wrong opinion of the atoning power of the blood of Christ. Hence the avoidance of any explicit statements of what to the author clearly was a fact; i.e. that the blood indeed was what Christ offered to God. However, as said, not in any stark realistic sense, as if what Christ offered to God in heaven was the literal drops of blood that had flowed on Calvary. Plainly the expression "the blood of Christ" must be taken in a figurative sense.

Just how he wishes to be understood a study of the significance of blood in the Old Testament ritual, of which the blood of Christ forms the New Testament counterpart, will teach. Also in the Old Testament sacrifices, blood was not a "selbstverständliche Sühnmittel", ¹⁾ a means of atonement merely *as blood*. As Lev. 17 : 11 teaches, the blood atoned by virtue of its being representative of a life that was given in death. Whichever theory of atonement we adopt, either the "penal substitution" theory or the

1) So Otto Schmitz in *Die Opferanschauung des späteren Judentums* p. 291 of the meaning of blood in Hebrews.

"symbolic"¹⁾ the blood represented *the life given in death* and as such atoned, irrespective of the question, whether that sacrificed life was a penal substitution for the sinful offerer, or a life that found in death its consummate expression of consecration to God. In the same way as the blood in the Levitical offerings, so the implication in 9 : 22, 23, 13 : 11, 12 is, that Christ's blood atones. Also His blood, figuratively considered, represents the life that has been given in death.²⁾ And since the blood of Christ represents the life of Christ, it encompasses the whole Christ in the sacrifice, the life of the Godman. The term "blood" is representative not only of the body of Christ, but of the human soul and of the divine life of the Son as well. In short the term "blood" is synonymous with the term "Himself". Insofar as it relates to Calvary, it indicates the life there given in death, 9 : 14, 18 ; and insofar as it relates to the heavenly side of Christ's offering, it denotes the selfpresentation of Christ before the throne of the Father, as of One Who had given His life in death and now advances this Self as an atonement offering for sin. The Levitical high priest, since his offering was not "himself", had to take the blood of the animal into the holy of holies, as evidence of the life that had been given in death. But the New Testament High Priest did not need to take strange blood into the sanctuary. Since He was Priest and Sacrifice in one, He offers what can figuratively be designated as His "blood", when He presents *Himself* before God's throne after having passed through death. It is exactly because in the case of Christ the terms "blood" and "Himself" are synonymous, that the author can substitute for the "blood", which the Levitical high priest is said to offer 9 : 21, 22, the "Himself" of the New Testament High Priest.

Whereas now the "body of Jesus Christ" (10 : 10) is not a full designation of His offering, it would be erroneous to limit the essence of it to the sufferings of Christ on Calvary, as if that to which God looked in the sacrifice of atonement were merely the amount of physical anguish and the accompanying distress of spirit suffered by the Godman. Such is a highly imperfect representation

1) Cf. Patterson in Hastings Bible Dictionary ; Art. Sacrifice.

2) Cf. further below on Hebrews' view of atonement Ch. IX.

of Christ's offering. Had it not consisted in more than the sum total of the sufferings He underwent, it would not then have had any atoning value for sin. The superior excellence of the "blood" of Christ as a means of atonement above the "blood" of the Levitical sacrifices to Hebrews does not lie in this, that these sacrifices involved the sufferings and death of mere animals, while Christ's that of a man, be it the perfect Man Jesus Christ.¹⁾ The antithesis is not between animal victims and the man-victim of preeminent dignity in the New Testament. Not all the physical anguish in the world, no, not even the sufferings of our perfect High Priest would have availed as atonement for sin, had Christ's offering not consisted in more than this. The acceptable sacrifice must stand in an *inner ethical relation to God's will*. The will of God to which it must conform is not a mere sovereign, arbitrary will, but as we shall have occasion to point out later²⁾, is the embodiment of a moral ideal. Hence the possibility of a sacrifice being an ethical embodiment of that will and having therefore inner atoning value in itself. Had Christ for one moment been disobedient to the will of God, or otherwise stated, for one moment not been bent on fulfilling the will of God, not all the sufferings in the world could have procured our atonement. But now, since in the offering of "the body of Jesus Christ" on the cross, there is revealed a steadfast obedience to the will of God, it has the power to justify, or to use the terminology of 10 : 10, to sanctify.³⁾

As little as Hebrews can be said to favor the view that Christ's offering consisted solely in His sufferings, can the opposite contention be said to be a true reproduction of the author's thought, that namely the essence of this offering consisted solely in the obedience He rendered, apart from those sufferings. Some have maintained that Christ, 't is true, suffered and died, and in doing so was constantly bringing an offering, but that the essence of that offering consisted in the lifelong obedience to the will of God (*lex naturalis Dei*) which was evidenced by undergoing those sufferings,

1) Cf. below what is said in explanation of 10 : 10 and 9 : 14 chapter VIII.

2) Cf. chapter IX.

3) Cf. Calvin : *Institutiones* II : 16 : 5.

though in themselves they formed no part of the offering. As proof the same context upon which the former contention rested (10 : 1—10), is pointed to. The claim is that here we have a contrast between sacrifice and obedience. The thought of 10 : 1—10 according to this view is that God did not want sacrifices at all. The offering which alone could bring atonement between God and man was a life of perfect obedience to God's will. Notice that on this view all thought of satisfaction to God's justice by penal substitution of a life vicariously sacrificed in death is excluded.

But if obedience to the will of God were here contrasted with sacrifices of any sort, then we would be forced to the conclusion that Hebrews does not have a consistent theory of sacrifice. For in the verses just preceding, (9 : 26—28), the sufferings and death do form an essential part of Christ's offering. His one sacrifice, as regards the part on earth, is there limited to the death of the cross. 9 : 26 tells us that for every offering in heaven there must be as its corresponding part on earth a suffering of death. Were Christ to offer often, He would of necessity have to suffer often. Clearly the selfsacrifice on earth is there made to coincide with the suffering of death on Calvary.¹⁾ Likewise in 9 : 28 we read that Christ was once offered up to bear the sins of many. The "once offered" of this verse is the parallel of the "once to die" of the preceding, and we have here an indisputable reference to the death *as death* as the offering which Christ has brought. As T.C. Edwards has stated it :²⁾ "The analogy between "men" and "Christ" breaks down completely, if the death of Christ was not the offering for sin.

However, there is nothing in 10 : 1—10 that necessitates our accepting that the author is here contrasting obedience and sacrifice simply, and thereby contradicting what was just said in 9 : 26—28. The real contrast is between the non-fulfilling of the will of God by the sacrifices of the first covenant and the coming of Christ into the world to do by His sacrifice what they failed to accomplish. God's will here spoken of is not God's will in general, but the *gracious will of redemption* that our sins be taken away,

1) Cf. also 13 : 12. See Riggenbach, Lünemann, Delitzsch.

2) Hebrews, in Expositors Bible p. 169.

in other words, that we be "perfected", "sanctified". 10 : 1, 4, 10. This gracious will of God those sacrifices could not accomplish, whereas, fleshly as they were (10 : 4), they did not bring atonement. Therefore God prepared a body for His Son as an organ, whereby the Son might fulfill the will of redemption not fulfilled by them. This redemptive will, insofar as it referred to the function which the Son was to perform, involved the will that He should die. For only, as the author had already previously pointed out, 9 : 14, 22, 26—28, by the selfsacrifice of Christ in death could the gracious will that our sins be removed be accomplished. And that the selfsacrifice of Christ in death procured what it was designed to do, the author assures us in 10 : 10 in these words : "By the which will we *are sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." The gracious will of God that we should be "sanctified" found its fulfillment not in the shadows of the Old Testament, but in the selfsacrifice of the Son. This will is here represented as the ultimate cause of redemption. What is here taught is not that Christ did not bring a sacrifice, only obedience, but that the offering of the body of Christ on Calvary 10 : 10 (cf. 9 : 28) was the perfect sacrifice, inasmuch as it stood in an inner perfect ethical relation to God's will. Both erroneous conceptions, as well that the sacrifice of Christ consisted in the sufferings of the body of Jesus Christ without the thought of obedience to the will of God, as mere obedience without the offering of the body, are by this context warded off. The fulfilling of the will of God, or if you will, the spirit in which Christ brought His sacrifice, is here set forth as that which gave to this sacrifice in contrast with the Levitical, its atoning value.¹⁾

The principle laid down in 10 : 1—10 must be evident to every one who has an eye for the *spiritual* nature of sin, that sin cannot be removed by the mere shedding of blood or physical anguish whether of man or beast, apart from the spirit in which such sacrifice is brought, but only when there is an act of holy loving devotion

1) Denney : Art. Priest in N. T., in Hastings Bible Dictionary IV p. 99 says : „For the inference drawn from these verses that Christ's work was not sacrificial, that His death was not an offering for sin, and that obedience is here placed in the room of sacrifice there is no ground in this context. Cf. also Delitzsch, T. C. Edwards, Bruce, Calvin.

to the will of God revealed in that sacrifice. This is the thought of 10 : 9, where the Son is quoted as saying : "Lo, I come to do Thy will, o God" *Absolute voluntariness* to do the will of God in dying is necessary, if the sacrifice of life in death is to have ethical worth before God. Furthermore, not only perfect obedience to the will of God is required in a true atonement sacrifice, but there must be a *perfect knowledge* of what that will of God demands. For without perfect knowledge of that will there can be no perfect obedience to it. However, the divine Son — for He it is that is here introduced as speaking 10 : 5—9 ; His coming into the world is here indicated 10 : 5 ; for Him God has prepared a body 10 : 5 ; — that Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, one with Him in essence, He, and it is needless to add, He alone of all men, can have the absolute intelligence of what God's will of redemption is. He therefore could say as no other could : "Lo, I come to do Thy will, o God".

The same thought in effect is taught by 9 : 14. The "blood of Christ", here represented as the means of atonement, refers unquestionably to the death on Calvary. In view of the comparison with the blood of animals shed on the Atonement Day, and of the relation in which 9 : 14 stands to 9 : 15 and 9 : 16 to 9 : 18, where blood and death are interchangeable, this fact is placed beyond a doubt. Blood and death are in this context practical synonyms.¹⁾ A more crucial question here is whether the *offering* refers to Calvary or to the selfpresentation in heaven. Ever since the time of the Socinians this has been a question of dispute. By the Socinian and Arminian commentators it was understood of the selfpresentation in heaven. (Cf. F. Socinus Bleek. Grotius etc.) However, the word "spotless" ἄμωμον, the Greek for אֲמִיִּם, which is descriptive of the offering of Christ, makes this view untenable. The thought of ἄμωμον evidently is, that just as the animal chosen for the sacrifice had to be without bodily blemish, so also Christ, the New Testament offering, before His blood could be shed, had to be without blemish in an ethical sense. The word "spotless" therefore characterizes the

1) Cf. e. g. Riegenbach p. 258 ff. Otto Schmitz. The latter says : "Der Ausdruck Blut Christi 9 : 12—14, 13 : 12, wird unverkennbar im Blick auf den geschichtlichen Akt des Todes Jesu gebraucht" p. 295.

One Whose blood was to be shed on Calvary as One, Who was ethically blameless. The Socinian argument, that ἄμωμον relates to the resurrected, glorified life of Christ seems in view of the parallel with the Old Testament sacrifices, a subterfuge. Moreover, the phrase "through eternal spirit" cannot be taken as a modifier merely of ἄμωμον, as if to indicate how Christ could be without spot.¹⁾ Already the position of the words in the sentence argues against this. It must be a modifier of the verb. Clearly it means to give the reason why the "blood" of Christ has a value as a means of atonement far transcending that of the beasts slaughtered under the first covenant.

What now is the meaning of this clearly most important statement διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου? It has long been a question of dispute, whether the word πνεύματος must be taken in a metaphysical or in an ethical sense. Those who hold to the view that it contains a metaphysical idea, usually find in it the same thought as expressed in 7:16; namely, that Christ had an imperishable life, that could not go down in death, so that Christ by virtue of this indissoluble life was able to present Himself after death to God in heaven and thus complete His offering.²⁾ However, there is no call in this context to emphasize the *eternal personality* of Christ. What is by this phrase to be accounted for is the *absolute worth* of Christ's sacrifice, why the blood of Christ had *infinitely more value* than the blood of beasts. The Old Testament offerings could only sanctify to the purity of the flesh, whereas they themselves were fleshly, belonged to the sphere of the σαρκός. They could not cleanse in the sphere of conscience. Notwithstanding, in their own sphere they did effect their sanctification. This effectiveness of those offerings in their own sphere, though inherently they had no cleansing power, makes it, thus the author's thought runs, a fortiori probable that the blood of Christ will cleanse the conscience in other words, be effective in the sphere of the spirit to which it belongs, because of its inherent spiritual power.³⁾ The thought

1) So Bleek p. 547.

2) So Hofmann, Riehm, Delitzsch, Wescott, Riggenbach.

3) Cf. Vos, in Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 590.

of the context argues against the view that the metaphysical thought is here predominant.

Among those who take it as ethical, there are that hold the expression *πνεύματος αἰωνίου* to be equivalent to *πνεύματος ἁγίου*.¹⁾ But however much it is true, that the Holy Spirit was given to Christ and that without measure, (cf. John 1 : 32, 3 : 34), as a qualification for the work of redemption, nevertheless such is not the thought of this passage. The absense of the definite article makes this impossible. Besides, the author could not have drawn the conclusion that the blood of Christ (cf. 9 : 12) worked eternal redemption from the fact that Christ was endowed with the Holy Spirit in His work as Mediator. Only the fact that the blood was shed through *eternal* spirit could give a corresponding eternal nature to the redemption it wrought.

Others²⁾ take *πνεύματος* as indicative of the voluntariness and beneficent intention that characterized Christ's selfsacrifice. It finds in the *πνεύματος*, the spirit in which Christ offered Himself, the reason for the preminent value of Christ's offering above the Levitical. No doubt this view is more in line with the thought of this context. It is because of the moral contents of Christ's sacrifice, that it far surpasses those of the first covenant and becomes the ideal sacrifice. That this is the correct interpretation, follows from more than one consideration. Already the connection with the preceding verses points in that direction. After indicating that the blood of bulls and goats was effective in its own sphere, that of the *σαρξ* (9 : 13), this verse (9 : 14) does not proceed with an "*Even so* shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience." This would be a strict argument from analogy. But it is said : "*How much more* shall the blood of Christ etc." . . . an a fortiori argument. The blood of bulls and goats sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. But intrinsically it possessed no such power. Its power lay in a carnal commandment. It could purify in its sphere, because God had graciously promised to accept it. But with the effective-

1) So Bengel. The reading *διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου* is not substantiated. It is only found in some lesser important later mss. Cf. Riggenbach p. 264.

2) So Bruce in Hebrews p. 345.

ness of the blood of Christ in its spiritual sphere, the sphere of conscience, matters stood differently, as the "much more" indicates. When God appoints the blood of Christ to be an atonement offering, then there is no arbitrariness with God. He does not accept it merely because He wishes to do so. But God recognizes the inherent power of that blood to bring about atonement. There is a value in that blood in itself, which works atonement with God. Wherein this inherent power of the blood of Christ is to be sought, we learn from the phrase διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου. The ethical content of this offering, the free and spontaneous spirit revealed in this sacrifice to fulfill the redemptive will of God, here distinguishes it from the blood of the Old Testament victims. The same thought of the voluntariness of Christ's offering follows from the peculiar mode of expression in this verse. The author does not say that Christ offered Himself "as eternal spirit," which would have been an exact parallel of the fleshly sacrifices said to have been offered in the first covenant, but "through eternal spirit." Christ was aroused by a spontaneous desire to give Himself a sacrifice for sin. It was this selfdetermination that gave to the ἑαυτόν, His offering, an inherent ethical value before God. This thought also follows from the position of ἑαυτόν in the sentence. It is placed before the verb to emphasize the thought that the selfdetermination, the voluntary obedience to the will of God, led Christ to this deed of Selsacrifice.¹⁾

But though the ethical side of πνεύματος is here predominant, we should err if we supposed, that it expresses only an ethical thought, to the exclusion of any metaphysical idea. The sharp antithesis between the ethical and the metaphysical, which divides commentators into two large camps, is foreign to the author's way of thinking.²⁾ The contrast between the σαρξ of the Old Testament offerings and the πνεῦμα of the offering of the New Testament High Priest must be interpreted in the light of the general teaching of Hebrews. As has been repeatedly pointed out, the terms ethical, spiritual, heavenly, eternal are to Hebrews synonyms, implying

1) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 591.

2) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 591.

one another. Eternal is not merely that which is unending , but that which is of such an inner ethical nature that its eternal duration follows of course. And conversely ethical, spiritual, ideal is that which belongs to the spiritual ; i.e. heavenly ; i.e. eternal order of things. That Christ offered Himself voluntarily and thereby gave to His offering an inherent ethical value before God, was due to the fact that He Himself belonged to the spiritual , eternal world, where such absolutely free, ethical selfdetermination is possible.

That this is a right interpretation of the author's thought follows from the attribute *αἰωνίου*, the modifier of *πνεύματος*. That through which Christ offered up Himself is a spirit, which has as its home the eternal world of heaven. That in this eternal spirit we have a reference to the Sonship of Christ is certain. For according to Hebrews it is just the divine Sonship by virtue of which Christ belongs essentially to that eternal world 7 : 3 ; is eternal High Priest 7 : 17 ; has an indissoluble life 7 : 3, 16, etc. The deity of Christ, otherwise stated, the eternal spirit, which characterized Him as divine Son of God, is here represented as the (ultimate) ground of the ethical in Christ's sacrifice, in other words, of that which gave to Christ's sacrifice its inherent value as a true atonement offering before God. That the author does not say : "Who through His deity offered Himself" but "through eternal spirit" is because by the latter mode of expression he indicates more clearly the sphere (the spirirual), wherein Christ's offering is to have its sanctifying power (cf. 9 : 14 "purge your conscience") and the absoluteness ("eternal") of the redemption it wrought. As objection against this interpretation might be advanced that it is not deity, but a human sacrifice that Christ offered to the Father. Notice however that we do not read : "Who *as* eternal spirit offered Himself" but "through eternal spirit." He avoids speaking of the eternal spirit as that which Christ offered, although the comparison with the Levitical sacrifices would have led us to expect it. The important point to notice here is that not in the first place *what* Christ offered, but *through what* He offered, determines what value it is to have before God. The sacrifice as such may meet

the demands of God's justice ; as long as the spirit through which it is brought is faulty, it will have no atoning value. When once the sacrifice as such of this High Priest ; i.e. "Himself", is the form of sacrifice which redemption requires, it is an easy matter to see that what is to give to this Self-sacrifice inherent value as an atonement, is the spirit through which it is offered. That which actuated this High Priest in bringing His sacrifice is that which gives to the sacrifice its ethical content and its atoning merit. Here again we see, as we did when studying the Person of the heavenly High Priest, that the author finds in the eternal divine Personality of our High Priest the determining feature of His priesthood. The eternal spirit characterizing Him as divine Son of God is therefore a most essential element of His priesthood. His human nature may be indispensable for His sacrifice ; that sacrifice cannot be confined to it. The ultimate cause setting the act of Self-sacrifice on the part of Christ in motion, and here represented as imparting to it its ethical quality, is the eternal spirit peculiar to Christ because of His divine Sonship.

After what has been said, it is not difficult to see why the deity of Christ should form so large a contribution to Christ's sacrifice as this verse indicates. The *perfect spirit* which led Christ to give Himself as a sacrifice, or to use the terminology of the author in 10 : 1—10, the *absolute voluntariness* was indispensable, if a sacrifice were to have atoning value. Absolute voluntariness however to do the will of God cannot exist without perfect knowledge of what that will of God for redemption requires. Hence *absolute intelligence* is likewise necessary. The animal was entirely unconscious of what the whole performance meant. As little could there be a thought of any will by the animal to undergo the suffering. But even for a man, granted even that he be a perfect man, but nothing more than man, it would be impossible, to fulfill these two absolute requirements for an atonement sacrifice. It lies wholly beyond the possibility of any human being, temporal spirit as he is, fully to know the omniscient will of the eternal God. And having no full knowledge of the contents of that will, it follows of course, that an absolute obedience to that will is out of the ques-

tion. But Christ offered Himself through the eternal spirit that characterized Him as the eternal Son of God. Therefore He, and forsooth He only of all that were ever one with our race, had a perfect knowledge of what that will of God demanded for redemption. He is the Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father (John 1 : 18), one with Him in essence, and He through His eternal spirit had a full knowledge of the thoughts of God. In the clear conscience of His eternal spirit He could therefore say as no man could : "Lo, I come to do Thy will, o God." 10 : 9.

Another consideration no less important is, that no *temporal* spirit has the right or the power freely to dispose of itself. It is bound for its own existence to God and can nor may dispose of itself at will. And yet this power must be present are we to speak of absolute voluntariness. But Christ's life was His own in a sense in which no man's is. He alone had the prerogative and power to yield His life as a perfect freewill offering to God. "Therefore" thus we read in John 10 : 17, 18, "doth My Father love Me—because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." And that this life was not violently torn from Him, but was voluntarily laid down, we learn from the story of the cross, as it is written that Jesus cried with a loud voice : "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" and having said thus, He *gave up* the Ghost." Luke 23 : 46. Because Christ is eternal Spirit, He is eternally free.

And last perhaps not least, only one endowed with *eternal* spirit could give to His sacrifice the character of an *eternal* redemption. cf. 9 : 12. No mere temporal spirit could impart an eternal efficacy to its sacrifice. Alone the eternal spirit through which Christ offered Himself is the guarantee, that His sacrifice for sin is *absolute* and *final*. To be sure nothing less than the offering of the Son of God incarnate could satisfy for our redemption.¹⁾

That the divine Sonship has added inestimable dignity to His offering follows from 10 : 29. There with reference to the sin of

1) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. 1907 p. 590.

apostasy it is said: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." The "blood of the (New Testament) covenant" in view of the juxtaposition of this phrase with the preceding "trodden under foot the *Son of God*", and of the fact that it is counted a *common* thing, is clearly thought to be blood of preëminent dignity because it is the blood of the Son of God and to have had its value increased by so much.

Summing up what Hebrews has to say regarding the essence of Christ's sacrifice, we come to the conclusion that the *what* which our High Priest offered to God as an atonement offering on Golgotha was the sacrifice of "Himself", or if you will, His "blood", including the physical sufferings and mental anguish of the Christ upon the cross, when He gave His life in death. This same offering "Himself", viewed from the aspect of One, Who had given His life in death, Who had undergone those sufferings, it was, that Christ presented to God in the heavenly Holy of Holies. This offering was the appropriate one which the redemptive will of God demanded (10: 10), and as such had an intrinsic value as a means of atonement, but only because it was the appropriate expression of an absolute obedience to the redemptive will of God, or more fully stated, of an eternal spirit through which it was brought. Perhaps the apparent dualism as to the essence of Christ's sacrifice between the "Himself", including the suffering of death as the *what* which Christ offered, and the obedience or the eternal spirit that gave it its atoning value, can be resolved into a higher unity. However, it seems to me, not in the way suggested by Canon Scott Holland¹⁾ "It has been implied that the moralizing of sacrifice lies in dropping the "outward" expression and in accentuating solely the "inward" act of will: so that Christ's perfect sacrifice is wholly inward, of the heart." But is it not essential to sacrifice that it should be the outward act by which the inward intention is realized, is pledged, is sealed? The inward selfdedication only becomes sacrificial

1) Quoted in "Priesthood and Sacrifice". A Report of a Conference held at Oxford December 13 and 14, 1899. Edited by W. Sanday p. XIII.

when it has discovered the appropriate offering by which it can verify itself. Only through attaining this expression, in outward realization, does the language of sacrifice apply to it. It has somewhat to offer, by which it can pledge its loyalty of selfsurrender : there is its relief, its reality. The process by which the sacrifice is moralized is, not by dropping the external offering, but by raising the moral quality of that which it expresses. This can, for ever, be rising higher and higher ; but always, as it rises, it will need to make its external offering ; and Christ completes all sacrifices because He gives perfect outward expression to the inner motive".¹⁾ The solution of Canon Scott Holland makes the offering ultimately consist in the obedience, and the "outward expression" is that *through which* the offering of obedience finds its expression. While in Hebrews it is just the reverse. In 9 : 14 by its peculiar phraseology "*through eternal spirit*" it studiously avoids calling the obedience the sacrifice and finds it rather in the *suffering of death* of the "Himself". If the *obedience* of Christ were the sacrifice, we would be forced to the conclusion that it was deity which Christ offered. For it was the obedience of the divine Son that (9 : 14 ; 10 : 7) is said to have qualified His offering.

1) Cf. I, 17 p. 85, cf. Also W. P. Patterson, in Hastings Bible Dictionary Art. Sacrifice p. 346.

IX.

THE THEORY OF ATONEMENT IN HEBREWS.

Thus far I have refrained from entering upon any discussion of the theory of atonement held by Hebrews, in order first to answer another question closely bound up, though not identical with it; i.e. what was the essence of Christ's offering, or the precise *what* which He offered to God. That fixed, we can now pass on to the related question as to the manner in which that offering operated towards God as the means of our atonement, or as to how it was the procuring cause of our redemption.

The answer to the question is by no means a selfevident one, as the widely diverging results, to which students of the epistle to the Hebrews have been led, go to prove. Thus e.g. Dr. Bruce is of the opinion, that the questions relating to a theory of atonement are left comparatively unanswered by Hebrews.¹⁾ Inasfar however as theologians find that Hebrews takes a definite standpoint, the views held can be subsumed under the following three heads, running parallel, it will be seen, with the three great divisions, into which the theories of atonement regarding the Old Testament sacrifices can be divided.²⁾ One class firmly holds to the view that the author of this epistle was nothing more than a thoroughgoing ritualist. Another finds in the atoning blood of Christ the symbol and pledge of a consecrated life; that the satisfaction rendered by Christ was "the lifelong obedience which found in the death its last and most signal expression."³⁾ While a third class

1) Cf. Bruce : Hebrews p. 349.

2) Cf. Hastings Bible Dictionary : Art. Priesthood by W. P. Patterson.

3) Cf. Bruce 347, Hastings Bible Dictionary Art. Priesthood by W. P. Patterson p. 346.

adheres to the theory that Christ's sacrifice brought atonement through being a penal substitution for His sinful people.

With Dr. Bruce I can agree to this extent, that we do not find in Hebrews a clearly formulated doctrine of atonement as we do in Paul's writings. Judging from the fact that Hebrews is a decidedly doctrinal epistle, we may be surprised not to find any such well-formulated theory. The following considerations¹⁾ however account for its absence. The author describes the atoning work of Christ in terms borrowed from the Old Testament ritual. This ritual deals with symbols, does not give us a formulated doctrine, but symbolized truths. It gives us pictures of truth. These pictures are left to explain themselves. Hebrews in adopting the Old Testament ritual terminology, naturally imparts to the truths it presents the same character. It deals with the great outward facts of Christ's redemptive work, His life, His death, His entrance into heaven, translates these into ritual language without giving us a well-defined philosophy of the truths lying behind these facts. Further, the aim of the writer to justify before his externalistic readers the fact of Christ's departure to heaven, led him to lay stress on the heavenly activity of the New Testament High Priest, so that His work on earth, though viewed at times as part of the heavenly high priesthood, is however oftener presented as a preparation to it. Moreover, it is not the *process* of the atonement, but the *result*, the *outcome*, which interests the author. It is the design of the priesthood and of the covenant to bring men near, to effect their union with God. This the priesthood seeks to do through its sacrifice. Hence the death is predominately viewed from the point of view of being the *instrument* meant to fit believers for their approach to God, as the words "purify", "sanctify", "render perfect" used in connection with that death go to prove. It is natural that under such circumstances we do not find a well-formulated doctrine of atonement. Notwithstanding, the author gives proof that for himself he had a well-defined theory, and was governed in his mode of expression by it.

1) Suggested by Dr. Vos in Pr. Th. Rev. Jan. 1916 Art. Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke.

At fault therefore I think those theologians to be, which hold that the author had no theory of atonement, that he was a thoroughgoing ritualist. It is claimed by these, that the author adopted the principle laid down (9 : 22) for the Levitical sacrifices, that blood atoned, without asking himself the further question, what inner value that blood may have had as a means of atonement. "Das Blut ist das *selbstverständliche* Sühnmittel."¹⁾ The higher efficacy, which the blood of Christ possessed above the blood of bulls and goats was due to its being the blood *of Christ*. The blood atoned ; and if we were to ask the author why, the only answer he gives is because God had so willed. However, as for ethical considerations, that Christ's blood possessed an inner value before God, whereby in some way satisfaction has been made to the demands of God's will, such ideas, it is claimed, are foreign to our author. However, "in this way he (the author of Hebrews) is made to appear inferior in spiritual insight to the Psalmist (quoted in Hebrews 10 : 5—7), who, it is admitted, set obedience to the general moral will of God above sacrifice."²⁾ Speaking of this class of commentators, Dr. Bruce remarks : "I have no sympathy with such starved exegesis." Neither has the writer of this thesis. Far from the author's being nothing more than a mere ritualist, although he adopts the language of the ritual, the whole trend of the epistle is away from ritualism, and aims to give its readers, troubled by externalism, an insight into the spiritual nature of Christianity. The offering of Christ (in 10 : 1—10) is not merely reduced to an arbitrary will of God, so that that offering atoned merely because God's will had determined, that we should be sanctified in this peculiar way, without regard to any inner value in that sacrifice. For then it would be difficult to understand why the Levitical sacrifices, also originating from the same will of God, would not have been considered equally effective. But it is there said of God : "Thou wouldest not this . . . but this." 10 : 5—10. That indicates that there was preference with God, hence reasonableness. And

1) Cf. Otto Schmitz : *Die Opferanschauung des späteren Judentums* p. 29, 291 H. Von Soden in *Hand Commentar : Hebrews* p. 74.

2) Cf. Bruce p. 380.

where there is reasonableness, there is no arbitrariness. God preferred the sacrifice, because, as shown above,¹⁾ by its intrinsic nature it satisfied as the Levitical sacrifices did not, the demand of the holy will of God. In the same manner the author argues in 9 : 14. The eternal spirit²⁾ through which Christ offered Himself, imparted to that offering the character of a real redemptive offering in contradistinction to the Old Testament sacrifices. In 2 : 10 it is said : "It became God" ἔπρεπεν, it was in conformity to His holy Being, "to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." The sacrifice of Christ is indeed reduced to the will of God as the ultimate cause of redemption, but that will conceived of not as arbitrary, but as the perfect expression of a perfectly Holy Being. This Holy Being, because of an inner necessity arising from the nature of His Being, could recognize an intrinsic value in the perfect offering of Christ. However, though the *offering* of Christ is represented as having inner atoning value which God could recognize, the fact that Christ *was allowed* to officiate as man's redemptive Mediator, in other words, the very primal cause setting redemption in motion, is not represented as a matter of justice on the part of God, but of grace, as being due to *the gracious will of God*. For it is said : "That He by *the grace of God* should taste death for every man." 2 : 9.³⁾

If now the author is not a mere ritualist, what then to him was the nature of the offering, which procured from God the atonement of man. Was it Christ's life vicariously given in death as a penal substitution for sinful man, or was it the consecrated life or perfect obedience rendered by our Mediator ? Or as W.P. Patterson states the issue :⁴⁾ "Was the satisfaction rendered by Christ the death to which He voluntarily submitted, or was it the lifelong obedience which found in the death its last and most signal expression ?"

Not a few commentators hold to the latter view. A much used argument is that the term "blood" when relating to the Levitical

1) Cf. chapter VIII.

2) Cf. chapter VIII.

3) Cf. Bavinck : Geref. Dogmatiek III p. 449, 454.

4) In Hastings Bible Dictionary Art. Sacrifice.

sacrificial ritual, (cf. Lev. 17 : 11), and when relating to the sacrifice of Christ as well, represents not death *but life*.¹⁾ This is then advanced as proof that the offering of that blood cannot indicate the suffering of death as a satisfaction to God's punitive justice, but must be symbol of a consecrated life of obedience. — The blood indeed represented the life of the sacrificial animal. But from what point of view ? As uninjured and intact, or as given in death ? Evidently, as a life *poured out in death*. We may not make an *artificial separation* between the blood and the death. The blood of a living animal was never expiatory. The animal had to be slaughtered. So that if we say the blood expiates, it is the same as to say that the life given in death, or otherwise stated, the slaughtering expiates.

But whatever opinion we may hold as to how the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices represented the life of the animal, it seems to me to be a certain fact, that the *writer of Hebrews* conceives of the blood of Christ as expiatory, by reason of its being a life poured out in death. Even Otto Schmitz acknowledges²⁾ that the term "blood" in 9 : 12—14 has reference to the act of death. His words are that the term there "unverkennbar im Blick auf den geschichtlichen Akt des Todes Jesu gebraucht wird." The way in which the argument relating to the death of the testator 9 : 15 ff. is coupled to the thought of 9 : 12—14, the interchange of the terms "blood" and "death" in 9 : 16 and 9 : 18 establishes that the author in speaking of the blood of Christ had His death in mind. If the blood of Christ would be symbol of the offering of a consecrated life of obedience, at any event, it would not include the obedience rendered during the entire life of Christ, but solely the obedience reflected in the surrender of that life on Calvary, since the term "blood" has reference solely to what happened there in the surrender of life in death. But as Otto Schmitz remarks³⁾ the term "blood" is to the author the concrete formula for the death of Christ as

1) Cf. W. Milligan p. 132.

2) Cf. p. 295.

3) Die Opferanschauung p. 295.

offering.¹⁾ The assertion that the term "blood", when used of Christ's offering indicates *life not death* is in view of the close connection between the blood and death in Hebrews *unwarranted*²⁾ It makes an artificial separation between Christ's blood and His death. And as the previous discussion on the precise nature of Christ's sacrifice has taught us, the bodily death is that which constitutes Christ Sinbearer and the Instrument of our sanctification. 9 : 28 ; 10 : 10.

But even if we have it once fixed that the offering is *limited* to the death or the life given in death, the question still remains, what in that death was the satisfaction, which Christ rendered to God. Was it the life voluntarily given in death as a penal substitution or as the fullest expression of a perfect obedience rendered to God ? Even after the conclusion reached when studying the precise nature of Christ's sacrifice, that it was the surrender of life in death, including the physical sufferings and mental anguish of the Christ upon the cross, viewed as the appropriate expression of an absolute spirit of obedience to what the redemptive will of God demanded, the question must still be answered, why the redemptive will of God demanded that selfsurrender in death. Was the satisfaction which the redemptive will of God demanded those sufferings as proof of a perfect obedience, or the vicarious suffering itself of the punishment of death, voluntarily submitted to ? Or otherwise stated, was it a penal satisfaction to God's justice, or was it the filial obedience manifested by Christ that pleased God and thus forms ultimately the means of our redemption ?

That there are texts, which point us in the direction of the first

1) Cf. on the meaning of the term "blood" in Hebrews the note of Riggenbach : Hebräerbrief p. 259.

2) Vs. Wescott : Note p. 299 f. W. Milligan p. 132. The view of Milligan and also of Wescott on the sense in which blood in the essence of Christ's sacrifice, and the relative importance of the sacrifice on Calvary and the presentation of the blood in the heavenly tabernacle, blood being the symbol of a consecrated life, and the presentation of it the important element, is in reality a revival of essentially Socinian ideas in quarters, where we would not have expected it. This view held by the Socinians, was after them defended by Bähr : Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus, and at the present time by W. Robertson Smith : Lectures on the Religion of the Semites.

of these two alternatives, I firmly believe. In 10 : 19, 20 the act of death — not merely the obedience manifested in it — is represented as the absolute condition of entrance into the heavenly Holy of Holies.¹⁾ The way into the holiest in Old Testament was closed off by a veil. That veil suggested to man that because of his sins no free access to God was possible. Whatever obstruction there was then between sinful man and God is here represented to have been rent when Christ's flesh was rent, His body broken up on Calvary. If the bodily death of Christ was the only way by which we can approach God, the *natural* interpretation of that statement would seem to be that only the death of Christ, the Just for the unjust, or the vicarious suffering of death for man is the means of atonement. The entrance into heaven not only for Christ, but for all Christians following (cf. 10 : 20) is to be found upon Golgotha, where by the death as by the rending of a veil an opening was made through which we all must pass. If the rending of the fleshly veil did this, then the solution which lies nearest is that of penal substitution.²⁾

An similar thought confronts us in 9 : 12. There we are told that Christ διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος entered into the Holy Place. That the term "blood" in this context has reference to the historical act of death is a fact widely accepted. That this verse does not read, that Christ *by means of* ἐν, or μετὰ but διὰ *through* His blood entered heaven, indicates that death was the absolute condition placed upon entering heaven, that without having given His life in death Christ could not have entered heaven as our High Priest. Of course for Him personally the entrance to heaven was never barred. But as our High Priest Whose business it was to offer sacrifices for sin, death was absolute condition. I cannot see how the symbolic theory of sacrifice does full justice to this text. Only then, it would seem, is it fully accounted for, when we find in that death itself and not in the obedience of a consecrated life symbolized by it, the satisfaction which God required. If then death opened the way to the heavenly Holiest, the natural interpretation is that the satisfaction,

1) Cf. Riehm p. 591.

2) Cf. Hofmann, Delitzsch.

which our High Priest rendered to God was death as penal satisfaction to God's justice as our Sin-bearer.

This view finds verification in the closing remark of this verse ; i.e. that Christ obtained eternal redemption for us. The word *redemption*, λύτρωσις, signifies deliverance by the payment of a ransom. In the word in itself the idea of penal substitution is not necessarily implied, though it is an idea belonging to a vicarious train of thought. However, from the relation in which this clause stands to the rest of the sentence, specifically to the entering into heaven διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος, the thought of vicarious satisfaction to the demands of God's justice follows as a necessity. The word λύτρωσις indicates that there was a foreign power from which Christ has delivered by the payment of a price. This foreign power, as the context (cf. e.g. 9 : 15) tells, was that of sin. But, we may ask, was it sin as guilt or as pollution from which Christ bought free ? That the former was meant follows from the fact that Christ ransomed from sin by the payment of a price *to God*. For if, as the phrase διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος indicates, He could not have entered heaven without having given His life in death, then God's will, forsooth the only preventing power, must have demanded this death. That death then becomes specifically a *Godward* act, performed as a satisfaction to demands of God's law. And if by satisfying these demands of God's law He entered heaven and gained eternal redemption, then the natural interpretation is that the redemption was from the guilt and punishment of sin. Christ's death then becomes the price, which the violated law of God from which sin deduces its power over man (Cf. Romans VII), demanded as the price of release from sin's condemning power.

Further corroboration of the above theory we have in the statement of the end, which the sacrifice is said to have attained. As well what the Old Testament sacrifices sought to attain, but could not, 9 : 9, as what Christ's sacrifice effected 9 : 14, was cleansing from the sense of guilt and punishment of sin.¹⁾ For what is here cleansed is not a *soul* but a *conscience*. And if Christ died in order

1) Cf. below what has been said on the effects of Christ's sacrifice chapter X.

to remove sin from a guilty conscience or the consciousness of sin, then to be sure the thought that naturally suggests itself is that Christ paid the *penalty* of sin by His vicarious suffering of death.

The fifteenth verse points in the same direction. Our Lord's death is there said to have been for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant. Year by year sacrifices had been offered by the Levitical priests in order to remove the transgressions from the people. But what with the inefficacy of those yearly sacrifices, the transgressions were heaped up high as heaven, and called for some One Who could effectually redeem Israel from them.¹⁾ Whereas the transgressions here spoken of are not merely of such that still lived when Jesus died, — in which case it could be doubted whether the death purposed the removal of the transgressions before God's face or merely from the conscience — but of the entire people of the Old Testament from the time of its institution at Mount Sinai on, the most of whom had died, so that no subjective removal from the conscience could have been thought of, the implication of the author must have been, that the guilt of past committed sins which had accumulated under the old covenant was still present before God as a testimony against His people, and that no new covenant relation could be established before this guilt was removed. Here as in 9 : 12 the sins are represented as having power over man. As long as that guilt was not expiated, man was under sin's condemning power and liable to punishment. From this power we are told the *death* of Christ 9 : 15 — and let it be observed, not a lifelong obedience culminating in that death — has bought free. If *death* — note the generic use of θανάτου — was the price of freedom from the debt of sin, then I can see no possible way to explain this text than with Hofmann to see in death or the pouring out of life in death the satisfaction which the will of God demanded. The death of Christ then becomes a penal substitution for that of sinful man.²⁾ The same thought of vicarious substitution of one death, the death of Christ, for other deaths,

1) The genitive τῶν παραβάσεων is genitive of separation.

2) Cf. Hofmann : Schriftbeweiss II—I p. 300 Compare the interesting comment on the statements of Hofmann by Delitzsch p. 408. Cf. Also Riehm p. 542, Rigenbach.

the death of His people, is contained in 2 : 14, where we are told that Christ through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is , the devil.¹⁾

In 9 : 28 we meet the same thought, that Christ's death was vicariously undergone as a substitution for the many whom Christ's sacrifice is said to benefit, only more forcibly stated than in the foregoing passages. Was the thought of penal substitution in those passages clearly implied, so that I believe the author could not have said what he did say without holding to the theory of penal substitution, here that thought is explicitly stated. Now whereas the author has here definitely stated, that the death of Christ appeared to him in that light, what is more natural than that in the above passages where the thought of penal substitution lies close at hand, the same view of Christ's death should have prompted him to make those statements ? Or we should have to be driven to the expedient of saying that the author had no consistent theory. But then the onus probandi lies with them who take that position.

In this important passage we read that Christ was once offered εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας —, "to bear the sins of many." It admits of no doubt that the statement that "Christ was once offered" has reference to the death of Christ and not²⁾ to the offering of Christ in heaven. The parallel with the foregoing verse makes this a necessity. Just as it is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgement, so also, the thought runs, Christ once died, and in that death was offered, and after this He shall appear the second time in the Judgement not as Sinbearer, but as Saviour of His people at the Judgement , securing salvation for the "many" for whom He died and was offered. The fact that He shall *appear* (ὀφθῆσεται) a second time, also proves that His once being offered was a visible transaction. Some have tried to explain this text on a moral basis, as if εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας referred to the *removal* of sin from the life of the believer in *sanc-tification*. But in that case the author would have used the word

1) Cf. on this text further chapter X.

2) So Bleek.

ἀφαιρεῖν, not ἀνενεγκεῖν, since ἀναφέρειν is never used in that sense. Moreover, there are other considerations that necessitate our understanding these words of the bearing of the guilt of sin in His death upon Calvary. For "to bear the sins" and "without sin" are opposites, contrasting how Christ appeared the first time in His death, and how He will appear the second time in the judgment. Truly the author could not have meant that at the second coming Christ would be free from personal inherent sin. For (cf. 7 : 26) that characterized Him as well at His first coming. What can alone be meant is that Christ the first time at His death was Sinbearer, vicariously laden with the sins of the many, and that He underwent the sacrifice of death in order that He might take upon Himself and by the vicarious suffering of death expiate the guilt of sin. Further, the phrase "to bear the sins of many" is unquestionably a reference to the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 53 : 12. In that Old Testament prophesy the sense of the sinbearing is not at all ambiguous. That the thought there is that the suffering Servant of Jehovah underwent death not as the result of any sins of His own, but as the punishment of His people's sins vicariously suffered, and that His vicarious death was the means of their atonement, is a fact generally accepted. It might perhaps be argued, that we have no certainty that our author used these words in the same sense as did Isaiah. However, if from other considerations, as already seen, we must conclude that the death is here held to be of the nature of penal substitution, then it is a legitimate inference that the quotation from Isaiah was used in no other sense than that originally given to it by Isaiah.¹⁾

1) The argument of Otto Schmitz, that the phrase "to bear the sins of many", while in itself conveying the idea of vicarious substitution, is only added to the thought of προσενεχθεῖς, but does not give us an insight into the author's view of how the sacrifice atoned, seems futile. His words are : „Aber diese nähere Bestimmung fügt eben etwas hinzu, was in dem Ausdruck προσενεχθεῖς noch nicht enthalten war. So ist allerdings an dieser Stelle — und nur an dieser Stelle im Briefe — eine Stellvertretungsaussage an den Opfervergleich *angeschlossen* ; aber der Verfasser gewährt uns hier nicht einen Einblick in das, was nach seiner. "Überzeugung dem Opfer sühnenden Wert verleiht." (Cf. Opferanschauung p. 291) But what does the added phrase "to bear the sins of many" mean, if it is not intended to give the rationale of the προσενεχθεῖς.

Finally, as Dr. Davidson has observed, "such terms as 'gracious,' 'transgressions', and 'bore', suggest the idea of the divine wrath, and the language touches upon, if it do not express, the more familiar Pauline conception." A further remark by the same writer is to the point : "It can readily be seen, however, how the idea that the whole transaction took place *within* the covenant prevented such a conception from coming to full expression and in this way is explained the absense from the Epistle of such terms as wrath, curse, reconciliation and the like".¹⁾

And if it intended to make plain what Christ really did when He offered Himself, then it *does* give us an insight into what, to the mind of the author, gives to the offering its atoning power. Read the instructive article of Riggenbach : "Jezus trug die Sünde der Welt" in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* XVIII Jahrgang 1907 p. 295 ff.

1) Cf. A. B. Davidson : *Hebrews*, note p. 205, cf. p. 147.

X.

THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S OFFERING.

Confirmation that the above is the theory of atonement as held by the author of Hebrews, we have in the *results* ascribed to Christ's offering. Some commentators claim that the result of the offering is represented as being a subjective one, consisting in the removal of the pollution of sin.¹⁾ In that case Hebrews would be unlike Paul, according to whom the guilt of sin is taken away.²⁾ Hebrews, to be sure, knows of a removal of the pollution of sin in sanctification . (cf. 12 : 14). But nowhere is that spoken of as a direct result of the sacrifice of Christ, implying that the atonement consisted in that. Wherever the results of Christ's sacrifice are mentioned, the reference is, as we shall see, to the removal of the *guilt* of sin.

Thus in 2 : 14, 15 we read that the purpose of the incarnation was to enable Christ to die, in order that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were throughout all their living subject to bondage. Why, we may ask, is the devil here introduced as one , whose power Christ had to break by His death ? Clearly this text implies that man has become enslaved to the devil. In 2 : 5 ff. the author had spoken of man's original destiny to rule over the inhabited earth. This naturally led the author to meditate upon the fall, recorded in Genesis III. It was the great fact of the fall, that prevented man from achieving the rule destined for him at creation. Instead of a ruler, we see in him a slave, in bondage to death. 2 : 15. This power of death is said to be wielded by the devil, 2 : 14. Of everything connected with the realm of death,

1) So e. g. Holtzmann cf. 344.

2) Cf. chapter IX.

he had the power. Hence every one who entered death, was at the same time delivered up to the power of the devil, who could torment him at will. The devil has not inherently this power of death. For as 9 : 27 teaches, death comes over man by divine appointment. Satan's power of death, however, is derived (cf. Gen. 3 : 1 ff.) from his seducing man to sin. By bringing man to sin, he gained the mastery over him, and brought sinful man to the death which God had threatened. And with man once in death, Satan by God's allowal, exercises full sway over man. If now man became subject to death and consequently subject to the power of the devil, as punishment for having sinned, then it follows that man can only be freed from the power of the devil by a restitution to God for the guilt of sin which surrenders man to death and Satan. With the account of Gen. III referred to in 2 : 5 ff. in mind, we can understand why it was exactly *through death*, that Christ could destroy him who had the power of death, and deliver man from bondage. Death must have been that which God demanded as the price of redemption from the guilt and punishment of sin and as a consequence from the power of Satan. Not a consecrated life, not a mere life that passed through death, was that which could free from Satan's power. The only sacrifice which could avail — note the generic use of τοῦ θανάτου in 2 : 14 — was *death*, the death to which Christ voluntarily submitted and for which the incarnation is said to have happened. The only adequate explanation of this text seems to be that of vicarious penal substitution.

Another result ascribed to Christ's sacrifice is that He thereby made propitiation for the sins of the people. In Greek pagan literature the word ἱλάσκεσθαι is mostly used with a personal object designating the deity. The meaning then was to render the irate deity propitious. The deity was angry with the worshipper. The latter therefore sought to render it friendly disposed by a deed of sacrifice. In the New Testament the word is not used in that sense. The bible avoids the pagan idea that God Himself needs to be changed to a merciful God or that man by a deed of his own can make such change. The bible teaches that God Himself sets the process in motion whereby He is enabled to show Himself propitious

consistent with His holiness, and can forgive sins. That the word *ἱλάσκεσθαι* is not used with the same connotation as in pagan literature, is clear from the fact, that not "God" but the "sins" are the object of the propitiation. And it would yield no sense to say, that the sins are made propitious. The word is here simply a translation of the Hebrew word *כָּפַר* "to cover" in the sense of "to obliterate" the sins. In the ritual sense attached to the Hebrew word, the priest was thought of as covering man before the sight of God because of his sins, or also as covering the sins themselves before God.¹⁾ The idea was that the sins were the obstruction preventing full communion between God and the worshipper. Only when these had been obliterated, could that interrupted communion be resumed. In the same sense the expression *εἰς τὸ ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας* must be here understood. This verse informs us that it was the business of our merciful and faithful High Priest to cover our sins and so remove that which prevented the free flow of God's grace to us, and divert His anger. In what way the Selfsurrender of Christ in death formed the means of our atonement, we are not told. The fact alone is stated that Christ by His high priestly labors had to bring about this propitiation. But from 9 : 28 the conclusion is not difficult to reach. Christ brought about this propitiation by surrendering Himself in death as a vicarious atonement, thereby doing satisfaction to God's punitive justice. This much may be legitimately be concluded from 2 : 17 that Christ had to obliterate the *guilt of sin*. That as in 9 : 28 He did this by giving His life in death as a penal substitution is the natural solution.

A next result of Christ's offering is indicated by the word *καθαρίζειν* (cf. 1 : 3, 9 : 13, 14, 22, 23 ; 10 : 2) This word describes the purifying effect of that sacrifice. The English rendering of it is misleading. It would lead us to suppose that the *καθαρίζειν* relates to what is generally understood as (ethical) sanctification. Which, however, is not the case. For various reasons the word must be understood in a purely forensic sense, as relating to the removal of the guilt, not of the pollution of sin. Already from the Septuagint

1) Cf. Riegenbach p. 60 Note. Zahn : Romans 3 : 25 p. 189.

usage this follows. There it is used either of the cleansing of the altar (cf. Exodus 29 : 37, 30 : 10, Lev. 16 : 19), or of the people (cf. Lev. 16 : 30).¹⁾ The altar was conceived of as being defiled with the uncleanness of the children of Israel. Not the pollution, but the guilt of the Israelites, which provoked the wrath of Jehovah, and prevented the free flow of His mercy (cf. Job 7 : 21) were brought upon the altar and defiled it. From this defilement it had to be cleansed. This is clear from the fact that the cleansing was brought about by the *sprinkling of the blood* of the sacrificial animal upon the altar. (Lev. 8 : 15, Exodus 30 : 10, Lev. 16 : 19) . The blood covered and thereby obliterated the sins upon the altar. Also the purification of the people was brought about by blood. (cf. 16 : 30). If so, then the καθαρίζειν must indicate an act of expiation. To the same conclusion we are led by the Septuagint translation of כִּפָּרִים (Exodus 29 : 36, 30 : 10) by καθαρισμός. Again in Job 7 : 21 the words אֶת-עֲוֹנוֹתַי יְתַעַבֵּר are rendered in the Septuagint version καὶ καθαρισμόν τῆς ἀμαρτίας μου.²⁾ The thought there evidently is that Job desires the cleansing from the guilt and punishment of his past sins.

Not different than the Septuagint usage is that of Hebrews. In § : 3 the Son is said to have sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, after He had made purification of our sins. The aorist participle teaches that the purification was not a continuous process, but a definite act performed once for all. Moreover, it teaches that the purification was accomplished before the Son took seat at the right hand of Majesty. Again, the aorist participle middle indicates that Christ made the purification of sins *in Himself*. This purification He has therefore not performed through the Holy Spirit in sanctification. It admits therefore of no doubt, that the purification referred to relates to Christ's sacrifice. By that one act this purification was forever accomplished. The purification relates very naturally to the removal of the guilt of sin. That the purification is of *sins* (plural) again points to the forensic sphere as the sphere in which the purification takes place. Were

1) Cf. Septuagint, Riehm.

2) Cf. Riehm p. 561.

it an ethical cleansing, we should have expected the singular. The genitive τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν must accordingly in all probability be taken as an objective genitive, implying that the sins were *purified away* by Christ. (cf. Mt. 8 : 3 where the leprosy is said to have been purified. Of course leprosy itself cannot be purified except in the sense described above. cf. Riegenbach. Riehm.).

In 9 : 14 we read that the blood of Christ shall "purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." It has already been pointed out ¹⁾ that the term "blood" refers to the sacrifice of life in death on Calvary. To this "blood", in other words to the sacrificial death of Christ, is therefore attributed the power to purify the conscience. Plainly the purification here mentioned is another than the kind mentioned in 1 : 3. There the purification was an objective fact, completed once for all before Christ sat down at the right hand of Majesty. Here it is a subjective purification. The conscience is purified. The relation between the two is that in 1 : 3 the atonement itself is signified, here the application of the atonement to the life of the believer. But though subjective, it is not an ethical cleansing. For not the ψυχή but the συνείδησις, the conscience is cleansed. And συνείδησις when used in Greek to designate the conscience, has a more limited meaning than its English equivalent. It relates exclusively to the guilt or innocence of the moral subject. If then the συνείδησις is cleansed, it can only be by the removal of guilt. But even if, with several present day commentators, we must understand by this word not *conscience* but *consciousness*, even then it is to be restricted to the consciousness of *guilt*. For the consciousness of having sinned and of being at present sinful is not abolished by the blood of Christ, but is present even in the most devout of Christians. It is only when we limit the sense to the consciousness of guilt, rendering the Christian liable to God's punishment, that the purification by the blood of Christ can be said to apply. (cf. 10 : 2). The believer, realizing what infinite value there is in the blood of Christ that was poured out in death for him, when he fixes his faith upon the one atonement

1) Cf. chapter VIII.

offering, experiences that all the sins of which he was guilty have been blotted out before the sight of God. That the purifying of the conscience, or if you will, of the consciousness, is from the guilt of sin, follows also from the fact that it is purified from "*dead works*." These "*dead works*" are not, as some suppose works done apart from or before the time of Christ, in particular, works done in obedience to the ceremonial system.¹⁾ As Dr. A. B. Davidson observes, "that is too bizarre an idea."²⁾ The very purpose of the context (cf 9 : 14) argues against this. For it aims to show, not how man can be liberated from the ceremonial observances, but how atonement of sins is secured. Moreover, the relation of 9 : 14 to the preceding verse prohibits our conceiving the "*dead works*" as referring to mere ceremonial acts. For we have here a parallel between the Old Testament service and the New. What in the Old Testament service debarred the worshipper from service was uncleanness of the flesh, bodily defilement caused by contact with a dead person. The obstacle which bars from service in the New Testament is not bodily defilement, but that which corresponds in the inner spiritual sphere "*dead works*" in other words, works that defile the conscience. Of the ceremonial observances as such, however unfruitful they may be after the advent of Christ, it cannot be said that they defile. Only then when we understand by these "*dead works*" positively sinful acts, works that because sinful, defile the conscience, just as contact with the dead defiled the body, and therefore debar from service and communion with the living God, only then is the parallel with the Old Testament answered for. According to the Levitical ceremonial, no person defiled by contact with the dead, might join in the temple service. (cf. Numbers 19.) Seven days he was declared unclean. On the third and seventh day he was to be sprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer and thereafter he might again enter the temple. Even so no one with a defiled conscience can enter upon the service of God and have communion with Him, until by the blood of Christ that obstacle preventing spiritual communion be removed. In other words sin causing defilement

1) So e. g. Wescott.

2) Cf. on Hebrews 6 : 1 p. 119.

of conscience guilt of sin must be removed. Sin as pollution cannot be understood by the term "dead works." For the thought is not that the believer will abstain from dead works in the future, but that there is a *present* burden lying on the conscience, which creates a sense of disability for the service of God. The "dead works" — note the plural — are sinful acts done in the past. And these cannot be ethically cleansed. Moreover, as Riggenbach has observed¹⁾, whereas in 9 : 15 with reflection upon 9 : 14 the redemption of the "transgression" under the first covenant is said to have been wrought by Christ's death, those "transgressions" must at least be included in the "dead works" if not identical with them. The final statement of 9 : 14 "to serve the living God," does not deter from the conclusion we have thus far reached. For what the author means by this added clause is not that the purification of conscience will produce in the believer the ethical change that he will begin to serve the living God. But just as in the Old Testament economy no one defiled by contact with the dead might participate in the divine service, so also no one with a defiled conscience may serve the living God. The purification of conscience is for the purpose that it may be again forensically possible to enter upon this divine service. No doubt the power to serve the living God is one of the fruits of Christ's labors, but that is not what the author means to tell us here. Only then, he means to say, is the true covenant relation possible, when the conscience is purified from everything that defiles it.

The use of καθαρίξεν in 10 : 2 is no more ethical than in the passages we have already discussed. There it is said of the sacrifices of the law, that the worshipper could not be purified by them, the implication being that by Christ's sacrifice this was accomplished. As proof the fact is pointed to that if the purification had once been established, the worshipper would have had no more conscience of sins. For if the conscience of sins be once removed, conscience once purified, then the people would have been free from the sense of sin. That this purification cannot refer to the removal of sin

1) p. 266.

as a moral condition of the mind, but to transgression rendering guilty before God, seems evident. Besides, as 10 : 3 informs us, because the purification was not effected, its opposite, a remembrance of sins, was yearly made. The former sins were constantly being brought into remembrance by the yearly sacrifices. A testimony these repeated sacrifices were that past sins had not been atoned through previous sacrifices (cf. Davidson). The perfect passive participle *καθαρισμένους* with the prefix *ἀπαξ* leads to the same conclusion. This phrase may best be rendered : "Having once been purified and being purified thereafter."¹⁾ That the purification wrought by the offering of Christ, if wrought once for all, is a purification from the guilt of sin, need scarcely be said.

A last text that comes under consideration is 9 : 23. In the first passage (1 : 3) the purification was an objective fact. It referred to the atonement itself on Calvary. In the two following (9 : 13 10 : 2) it was a subjective purification, relating to the application of the atonement to the consciences of man. In 9 : 23 we have a purification that is again purely objective, relating this time to the application of Christ's atonement to the heavenly tabernacle. The heavenly Holy Place, where the throne of God is, according to this verse, needed cleansing by the blood of Christ. In order to a right understanding of this purification, we must compare it to the purification of the Old Testament tabernacle. This tabernacle was purified by means of expiation. As Lev. 16 : 15, 19²⁾ indicates, the tabernacle was purified by means of the covering with the blood. The tabernacle was conceived of as being unclean because of the transgressions of Israel (cf. Lev. 16 : 19). But the tabernacle was the place of meeting between God and His people. And as long as the tabernacle was not purified of the uncleanness caused by the transgressions, God could not dwell in it. So also the heavenly sanctuary is here conceived of, not as it is in itself, free from whatever taint of sin, but as the locality, the sphere of communion where God and His spiritual Israel meet. This place, frequented by this unclean people in their drawing

1) Cf. Wescott.

2) Cf. Septuagint version.

nigh to God, as well as the people themselves, is thought of as being defiled. The worshippers bring their uncleanness along with them when drawing nigh to God. Ethically, however, they cannot be said to bring any uncleanness into heaven. But just as in the case of the former tabernacle, the people bring their *guilt* into the heavenly tabernacle. As the earthly tabernacle was cleansed by the blood of goats and calves, so the heavenly was purified by the blood of Christ. Also here we have purification through expiation, cleansing of the heavenly tabernacle by the covering up of the transgressions.¹⁾

Christ's sacrifice is further said to sanctify. (ἀγιάζειν). (cf. 2 : 11, 9 : 13, 10 : 10, 14, 29, 13 : 12). The English rendering of ἀγιάζειν, to sanctify, is misleading. The word "sanctify" is usually understood in the sense of "to make holy in character." In Paul's writings the term appears in that sense. (cf. I Thessa. 5 : 23). That, however, does not determine the use of the term in Hebrews. The primary meaning of the word is to make ἅγιος, render or declare sacred, to consecrate.²⁾ It includes the negative thought of separating from that which is profane, and the positive one of consecrating to God. As far as the root meaning is concerned, therefore, it may as well have a forensic as an ethical connotation. It is left to the context to determine its specific meaning. If now we examine the texts in Hebrews in which this term appears, we shall find that wherever it is correlated with the sacrifice of Christ, the constant use is not ethical but forensic. In 10 : 10 this sanctification is represented not as being in process, but as completed in the believers. (ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν the perfect participle). This sanctification is said to have been performed "once for all."³⁾ Thus also in 10 : 29 the sanctification is represented as a single act (ἡγιασθη), completed in the past, and clearly cannot be understood in an ethical sense, but must be understood of a setting apart from the world

1) Cf. Nösgen : N. T. Offenbarung p. 132.

2) Cf. Thayer.

3) Ἐφάπαξ must be construed with ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν and not with προσφορᾶς. Cf. Riggenbach. However, even if we should construe it with προσφορᾶς the sanctification remains a single act.

and a hallowing to the service of God. Moreover, the sanctification is there said to have been wrought by the blood or death of Christ, and cannot refer to progressive sanctification. The same is true of 13 : 12, where Christ is said to have sanctified His people through His own Blood. In all these passages the taking out of the sinful world and consecrating to God is conceived of as a single act, performed once for all in the offering of Jesus Christ. If so, then the offering must to the mind of the author have taken away the guilt of sin, that forensic obstruction, the removal of which was the ἁγιάζειν, the consecrating to God of the covenant people as a body of worshippers. But the moral change in believers cannot be understood by this single sanctifying act. Not even by taking it as a proleptical statement. For the covenant people were sanctified *as a unit* 13 : 12, when Christ suffered without the gate. And every person is sanctified individually as soon as he is introduced into the covenant. cf. 10 : 29.

According to some¹⁾, 2 : 11 and 10 : 14 speak of an ethical sanctification. I cannot see however that these texts contain what is contended for. The means whereby Christ sanctifies and men are sanctified is not stated in 2 : 11. But from the context, where the author's chief concern is to point out the propriety of Christ's sufferings and death, as well as from 10 : 10, 29, 13 : 12, it is clear that this sanctification takes place by means of the sacrificial death of Christ. By that death Christ sanctifies and men are sanctified. The present participles do not bespeak a progressive ethical process, but must be taken as the present of description and are to be rendered : "He Who is the Sanctifier and those who are objects of sanctification." As to the time when the sanctification takes place, nothing is said. But even if it should be insisted that the participles refer to the present time, even then the use of ἁγιάζειν elsewhere (Cf. 10 : 10, 29, 13 : 12, 9 : 13) makes it more than probable, that the continued expiation of Christ in heaven would be what the author meant, rather than an inner ethical change. In heaven the expiation is being continued in the continued application of His blood

1) So Wescott and Riehm.

to the case of each new believer that is brought into covenant relation to Him. The present participle, ἁγιαζομένους, in 10 : 14 is also a present of description, a timeless present, and lends no support to the idea of an ethical change produced by this sanctification. The author does know of a sanctification, whereby an inner ethical change is produced and man ethically brought closer to God. Such a fuller entrance into relation with God is implied in 12 : 10, where the chastisement of God is said to have the aim that we might be partakers of His ἁγιότητος. Some also find this ethical sanctification expressed in 12 : 14. However, judging from the context, in which the ἁγιασμός is spoken of, it is doubtful whether more is meant than an admonition to preserve the condition of consecration already obtained.¹⁾

In 9 : 13, 14 on the other hand, the similarity of meaning, which the author evidently attaches to the term ἁγιάζει and the forensic term καθαρῖεῖ leaves no doubt that there "to sanctify" refers to the forensic sphere. These two terms are to Hebrews so alike in meaning, that for the ἁγιάζει of 9 : 13 he can in the corresponding phrase in 9 : 14 substitute καθαρῖεῖ. Some have even concluded from this, that these terms are identical in meaning. This is true in part. As regards, the negative idea in ἁγιάζειν it as well as καθαρῖζειν has reference to the removal of the guilt of sin. But the former contains over and above this negative idea, the positive one of *consecration*, as the purpose for which the removal of sin took place. Hence in 9 : 14 when substituting the latter word for the former the author finds it necessary to add as the positive purpose for which the purifying took place "to serve the living God," a fact not necessary to be added in 9 : 13, whereas ἁγιάζει already included it.

One other result still to be mentioned is that indicated by the word τελείωσις. The τελείωσις of *Christ* has already been discussed elsewhere.²⁾ Here we have only to enquire, what the word means when used in regard to men. The word appears in this latter usage in 7 : 11, 19 ; 9 : 9 ; 10 : 1, 14, 11 : 40 12 : 23). In all these passages

1) Cf. Davidson.

2) Cf. chapter V.

the general signification which is constant throughout, is that of bringing to the appointed end in the sphere referred to.¹⁾ To this commentators quite generally agree. It is only when we seek to determine the particular sphere in which the τελείωσις takes place that opinions diverge. In the first two passages (7 : 11, 19) we have the two general statements that the Levitical priesthood and the law made nothing perfect. It is not said in what sense they did not make perfect. However, in the latter text there follows a statement that sheds light upon the author's meaning. With the law which perfected nothing, the new covenant is contrasted. This new covenant meant to Hebrews the bringing in of a better hope. Through this hope we draw nigh to God. The thought of the passage can be restated as follows : In contrast with the law the new covenant does perfect, and this perfecting consists in the drawing nigh to God. To perfect is, therefore, as Dr. Davidson expresses it²⁾ "to put the people into the true covenant relation of worshippers of the Lord, to bring them into His full fellowship." It is here a theocratic term, resembling the term "to justify" in Pauline terminology. In the same sense the word is used in 10 : 1, where it is said of the law, that it was not able προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι "to make the comers thereunto perfect" by its sacrifices. From the words κεκαθαρισμένους, 10 : 2 ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας 10 : 4, and ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν 10 : 10, which indicate what would have resulted had the law been able to perfect, we learn that "perfection" here has reference to the removal of the guilt of sin and of consecration as worshippers to God. Moreover, as the word προσερχομένους tells, the τελείωσις has reference to the worshippers in the capacity of such that draw near. To that end the conscience of sins needed to be removed. 10 : 2. That this τελείωσις must be brought about by sacrifice again points to its forensic nature as involving the removal of the guilt of sin.

A like use of τελείωσις is made in 9 : 9, where it is said of the gifts and sacrifices of the Old Testament priests, that they were not able to perfect the worshippers as to conscience. The implied

1) Cf. Davidson p. 208.

2) Hebrews p. 208.

thought is that what these could not do the offering of Christ did. As the limiting phrase κατὰ συνείδησιν indicates, the perfecting relates to the complete removal of sin from the realm of conscience. As long as those sacrifices did not remove all consciousness of the guilt of sin, they could not be said to perfect.¹⁾ Moreover, those that were to be perfected are λατρεύοντες men *in the capacity of worshippers*. As long as conscience was not free from the sense of guilt, the Israelite could not enter into fellowship with God in divine worship. The use of τελείωσις in 9 : 9 is to be sure subjective, however not ethical but forensic.

In 10 : 14 we read : "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified". What is to be understood by the sanctified has already been indicated.²⁾ In 7 : 19 9 : 9 10 : 1 the perfecting was subjective, relating to the application of the atonement to the life of the believers. Here it relates to the atonement itself. The Old Testament priests (cf. 10 : 11) stood daily ministering and daily offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. Had their sacrifices been able to procure remission of sins (Cf. 10 : 18), there would no more have been an offering for sin. In contrast with this fruitlessness of these sacrifices, it is said that Christ by His one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Evidently "perfection" is here said to consist in the removal of the guilt of sin. That this "perfection" has been wrought forever *by one sacrifice*, points to its purely objective character, as having reference to the guilt of sin. Some maintain³⁾ that the "perfection" here cannot be restricted to the forensic sphere, but includes the bringing into full communion with God as well ethically as theocratically. However, proof for the ethical connotation of τελείωσις seems to me to be absent. That those who are the objects of this "perfection" are called ἀγιαζομένους, does not point in that direction. For this latter word itself has here no ethical import, but means those consecrated *as worshippers*⁴⁾ The fact

1) For the meaning of συνείδησις cf. on 9 : 14.

2) Cf. chapter VIII.

3) So Riehm, Riggenbach.

4) Cf. above p. 163.

that this "perfection" was wrought once for all by Christ's sacrifice, a purely objective fact, accomplished long before many who were to be *ethically* sanctified as yet existed, does not plead for the opinion that τελείωσις here has an ethical element. That it should here be used proleptically, denoting what was ideally obtained by the death of Christ, but later by gradual development was to become a fact in the ethical perfection of believers, is at best improbable, in view of the contrast with the result attributed to the Old Testament sacrifices, where the removal of guilt alone is spoken of. (cf. 10 : 11, 18).

In 12 : 40 we are told, that the Old Testament saints did not receive the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. There is some doubt whether the τελείωσις here has reference to what is still to take place at Christ's parousia, or to what has already taken place at the beginning of the Christian era.¹⁾ To those that hold to the former view, the "perfection" looks to the full salvation, that will come for the Old and New Testament believers at Christ's second coming.²⁾ The "something better" which God has provided "for us" means then better than what otherwise would have been our lot, had "perfection" come during Old Testament times. Had "perfection" come in their day, had in other words the final condition of things come then, the succeeding generations would not have been born, and they of the Old Testament would have enjoyed salvation without us. Since however God stayed the fulfillment of that promised salvation, we of the present generation are added to the number of those who will enter into the fulfillment of the promises already given in Old Testament times. — A more probable interpretation, however, it seems to me, is the one which understands τελείωσις — of the fulfillment of promises which took place at the opening of the Messianic age. To state it in Dr. Davidson's words ;³⁾ the "perfection" refers to "the full removing of sins and introduction into a condition of true covenant fellowship with

1) Cf. Riehm p. 583 Note.

2) Thus e. g. Riggenbach.

3) Cf. on 12 : 40.

God.”¹⁾ The “something better” is not better than we would have otherwise experienced, but better than what the Old Testament saints in their life of faith attained to. Believers of the Old Testament times were not perfected without us of the Messianic age, though we are perfected without them, without what happened in their day. Their “perfection”, the fulfillment of the promises to them ; i.e. the remission of sins and full covenant fellowship with God, had to wait until, depended upon what was to happen in our age ; i.e. the sacrifice of Christ. (Cf. 9 : 15). We in contrast have “perfection”. We have remission of sins and free access to God (Cf. 10 : 22), through the new covenant that was established in that sacrifice. (9 : 15). The new world with its perfect, final state of things is not to Hebrews first reached at Christ’s parousia. It has to him in a sense already become real with the introduction of the Christian era. The heavenly world, wherein the perfect order of things is found, is represented (cf. 12 : 22—24) as projecting itself upon earth. Believers of this age have already in a sense entered upon the final state of things, where remission of sins and covenant fellowship with God have become an established fact. To refer this “perfection” to Christ’s second coming, does not square with the author’s representation elsewhere, since both for New Testament believers (10 : 14) and for those of the Old Testament (12 : 32) perfection is, ever since the death of Christ, an accomplished fact²⁾.

From the study of the above passages we learn, that the *τελείωσις* of believers, insofar as it is correlated with the sacrifice, conveys in its fullest sense the negative thought of removal of the guilt of sin, and the positive theocratic idea of reestablishment in full covenant communion with God as worshippers. It is used either objectively of the “perfection” brought about once for all, when Christ offered Himself to God, or subjectively of the “perfection” of the several believers as to conscience resulting therefrom, whereby the consciousness of guilt is removed. But nowhere has the

1) Cf. also: E. Schürer II p. 291, B. Weiss : Hebrews in loc.

2) Cf. on *τελείωσις* Nösgen N. T. Offenbarung p. 126.

word an ethical connotation to denote an advance to ethical perfection brought about by Christ's offering.¹⁾

Summing up what the various results, which Christ's sacrifice is said to have had, tell us, we find that as well 2: 14, where the destruction of him who had the power of death is mentioned, as the terms ἱλάσκεσθαι, καθαρίζειν, ἁγιάζειν, τελείωσις teach, that the theory of atonement in Hebrews is not a *subjective* but an *objective* one. The results attributed to Christ's death imply the removal, not of the *pollution* but of the *guilt* of sin. As we shall have occasion to see later, the positive ethical blessings are rather associated not with the death, but with the intercession of Christ. Wherever the results of the death are spoken of, everywhere the destruction of the guilt of sin and the establishment of theocratic covenant relations with God are alluded to. Furthermore, whereas these results are said to flow from the offering of Christ and from it alone, the fact is thereby emphasized, which finds expression in 10: 10, that God did not by a sovereign act freely forgive sins, without any retribution to His violated law, but that He demanded the death of Christ as the price of the remission of sins. From the *results* of the offering we may not learn *what* satisfaction to God's will there was in that death, whether the symbol of a consecrated life, or the death of the perfect High Priest voluntarily submitted to as a penal substitution for the transgressing covenant people, yet the fact that the death was undergone as the condition, which God's will required for the remission of guilt, is by these results clearly set forth. The question which these results leave undecided; i.e. *what* satisfaction to God's will there was in the death of Christ, is answered as we have seen in other passages, where not only in the terms "gracious", "transgressions" "bore", implying as they do the idea of divine wrath, and in such passages as 2: 14; 10: 19, 20; 9: 12—16 the *implied* thought is that of vicarious penal substitution, but where, as in 9: 28, that thought is *definitely expressed*. And in fact if, as these results show, the death of Christ was the

1) On τελείωσις cf. Julius Kögel: "Der Begriff τελειῶν im Hebräerbrief" in Theologische Studien herausgegeben Martin Kähler 6 Jan. 1905.

condition, which the will of God demanded for the remission of the guilt of sin, and that will not an arbitrary will but the embodiment of a moral ideal, then it seems hard to understand, how any but the penal substitution theory will adequately explain why God demanded that death, even if the author had not himself supplied this explanation.

XI.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING IN HEAVEN

We have above had occasion to observe, that Christ's offering was a *complex act*, being not merely limited to His death on Calvary, but including as well the Selfpresentation in the heavenly Most Holy Place. We have also already answered the question, wherein the offering in heaven consisted, so that that need not detain us here.¹⁾ The offering on Calvary and the offering in heaven are not two independant offerings, but indispensable parts of the one offering for sin brought by Christ. Hebrews is emphatic in pointing out in various places (7 : 27, 9 : 12, 26, 28 ; 10 : 12, 14,) that Christ offered Himself once and once only. But it is equally emphatic in including the presentation in heaven under Christ's offering. 8 : 3, 9 : 25, 26. If now as the foregoing discussion has aimed to prove, Christ brought atonement by voluntarily giving Himself in death as a penal substitution for sinful man, why is further action still necessary ? If that one act of Selfsurrender in death has sufficed to atone for sin, how is it, we may ask, that Christ must still present Himself before the Father's throne to complete His offering ?

Some²⁾ have thought to solve the difficulty by means of the theory³⁾ that the fundamental conception of offering is *not death but life*. "Death⁴⁾ is an act accomplished in a moment. Life is a

1) ' Cf. chapter VIII.

2) Thus W. Milligan : *Ascension etc.* p. 133, 134.

3) Already held by Bähr. Also defended by Robertson Smith in his book : *The Religion of the Semites*.

4) Thus W. Milligan p. 134.

condition or state." And since, it is said, Christ offered His life, albeit as having passed through death, Christ can offer it on Calvary, can offer it at His entrance into heaven, and in fact is offering it unceasingly before the Father's throne. Thus we obtain the unified conception of the one offering for sin brought by the New Testament High Priest. However, as I have contended elsewhere¹⁾, although the fundamental conception of sacrifice is indeed life, it is by no means a life merely *as life*, uninjured and intact, but a life *poured out in death*. It is the *surrender* of life in death that forms the offering. Therefore for practical purposes it is the same as saying that the *act of death* is the offering.

A nearer approach to the true solution can be gained from the Old Testament sacrificial system than the above theory has sought to gain from it. The Old Testament sacrificial system indeed holds the key to the solution of the difficulty. Not as if Christ's offering were patterned after these. It is rather the reverse. Christ's offering is the archetype of which these form the ectype. 10 : 1. But exactly for this reason these earthly shadows can supply the clue to a proper understanding of the heavenly realities. In the Old Testament sacrifices the blood, representing the life poured out in death, formed the essence of the sacrifice.²⁾ The act of surrender of life in death indeed was the atoning act. The reason why further action with the blood was necessary and the offering not concluded with the slaughtering, is because in the law sacrifice always included more than the mere atonement for sin. Were mere atonement of sin intended, the sacrifice of death would have sufficed. This is clear especially from two passages from Old Testament scripture. In Deut. 21 : 1—9 we have given us the prescription of the law relative to the expiation of an uncertain murder. When a murder had been committed and the murderer not discovered, the elders of the city nearest the place of the murder secured expiation by taking a heifer to a rough valley and there breaking its neck, and washing their hands over the heifer. In that transaction, it will be noticed, expiation took place through the killing alone. Nothing was further

1) See chapter IX.

2) See chapter IX.

done with the blood. It was not carried to the altar, nor sprinkled. This was not a strict sense a vicarious act, for it did not expiate the unknown criminal. But it emphasized the general principle, that the taking of life must be expiated by the giving of life. The sinner was not reconciled to God, merely the guilt of sin expiated by death, and removed from the community. The same idea underlies the statement of Moses (Exodus 32 : 31—33) : "Yet now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin — ; and if not, blot me out of Thy book which Thou hast written." The meaning there is not that Moses did not care to live any longer, if the Lord punished Israel. But as the answer of the Lord : "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book" indicates, Moses offered his life as a vicarious sacrifice to expiate the sin of Israel. The principle underlying that statement is that atonement comes through death. — The atonement, that is to say, the expiation of sin, was therefore secured when the life of the transgressor or his lawful substitute had been poured out in death. But the sacrifice included over and above this the *application* of the atonement. For the covenant had as its aim not merely the mere atonement of sin, but the reestablishment of union between sinful man and God. (cf. Hebrews 8 : 8—13). Hence the high priest, the mediator of the covenant, needed not only to make atonement by removing the guilt of sin, the obstacle preventing this covenant union with God, but also to make the application of the atonement before the throne of God in the most holy place. Only when the application had been made, was the atoned for people brought again into union with God — the aim of the covenant —, and could the high priest return to bless the people in God's name as a result of this reestablished union. As regards the first part of the offering, the expiation of sin, Christ could already say : "It is finished", when He died on the cross. And Hebrews , in places where he refers to this expiation of sin, can represent the offering of Christ as already completed with the death on Calvary. Cf. 9 : 28, 10 : 10.

This mode of expression, however, does not prevent the author from including at other times the Selfpresentation in heaven under the offering. cf. 9 : 23—25. The reason for this is exactly the

same as in the case of the type of Christ's offering under the Old Testament. The application of the atonement must still be made. In other words the High Priest must bring His "blood " before God's throne in the heavenly Most Holy Place as evidence that the expiatory death, the condition upon which the covenant people are permitted by God to enter into union with Himself, has been fulfilled. cf. 10 : 19.

The necessity for this application of the atonement *as a special act*, distinct — both in time and place — from the act of atonement on Calvary, does not arise from the thought that God's presence were limited to heaven. For God is everywhere present, also on Golgotha's hill, and in so far needs no special act to acquaint Him with the act of atonement. Nevertheless heaven is the place of the special manifestation of God to His creatures 4 : 16. It is there that the throne is, whence this King of Creation rules over His creatures. To this throne, the place of God's special revelation to His creature, man's Mediator must go with His sacrifice, if He is to reunite man with God.

On the other hand, the atonement itself ; i.e. the expiation of sin, could not take place before that throne, because the atonement needed to take place *before* the sinner or his lawful representative could before God's holy Presence. 12 : 29. But equally necessary it is for the union with God that when the atonement is once brought about, the application of it be made before God's throne. This suggests why the offering necessarily consists of two parts, the atonement on Golgotha and the application in heaven.

When did this application on the atonement or the offering in heaven take place ? Some¹⁾ hold that Christ presented His offering to God during the three days that He was in the state of death. The representation of Hebrews, however, does not favor this view. It would imply that Christ, after presenting His offering in the heavenly Holy of Holies, had again left it. But a true atonement demands that the High Priest never leave the heavenly throne, but abide forever before the throne of God for us. Only by His abiding

1) Thus H. Witsius : *Miscellanea Sacra* Tom. I Lib. II Dissert. II 90. Cf. Davidson p. 153, 199.

there, does the way remain open for us. 10 : 19. Moreover, the the epistle knows of only one entrance into the Holiest. In 9 : 12 we are told that Christ "entered once into the Holy Place". And in 9 : 24 the purpose of His entering is given as "now to appear in the presence of God for us." When Christ made offering for sin, He did not return from the Holiest to this earth, but "sat down at the right hand of Majesty on high." 1 : 3, 10 : 12. Hebrews rather connects His Selfpresentation with His one entrance into heaven at the ascension. It was then that Christ passed through the heavens 4 : 16, that He entered once into the Holy Place 9 : 12, there presented His offering 9 : 24, 25 ; and forthwith sat down at the right hand of God. 10 : 12.

A question much discussed at the present time is whether the offering in heaven is to be connected with the moment Christ entered heaven before He sat down at God's right hand, or with His continued never-ending life in heaven. Was the offering finished before Christ sat down, or is it one that never ends. It is claimed that Hebrews must indeed have held the view of a continuous offering in heaven, since the life that Christ offers to God is continuous.¹⁾ However, as already pointed out, such is not the thought of Hebrews. It is not a life merely *as life*, but the surrender of that life in death that constitutes the offering, And this cannot be continuous but ceases the moment the act of death has taken place. The only reason why the offering was not completed on Calvary but includes the presentation in heaven is, as seen, because the offering included not only atonement but also application of the atonement.²⁾ And this application as well as the atonement sacrifice, Hebrews tells us, was *momentary*. The entrance of Christ into heaven, His appearance before God's throne, the sprinkling and purifying of the heavenly tabernacle, and *as well* the presentation of His "blood" are by Hebrews represented as performed in a moment. The fact that it is repeatedly said that the offering was brought once for all, fully proves this. (Cf. 5 : 7 ; 7 : 27 ; 9 : 13, 14, 9 : 24—28 ; 10 : 10—14). Though it is often done by commentators, it seems

1) So Riehm p. 525 Milligan p. 134.

2) Cf. Davidson p. 200.

to me to be futile, to interpret the statements "once" and once for all" in these passages as meaning an offering that never ends and therefore cannot be repeated. As W.P. Patterson has remarked:¹⁾ "It is said indeed that that which is unchangeable and everlasting is not repeated, but it is hardly disputable that what was present to the mind of the writer to the Hebrews was the contrast of the ever-renewed to the completed, not to the never-ending offering."

As proof that Hebrews held that Christ's offering is unceasing, appeal is made especially to the statement in 8 : 3. There we read : "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices ; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." It is affirmed that it is *in heaven* that Christ "must have somewhat to offer" because it is a heavenly ministry in contradistinction with an earthly and a High Priest that is set on the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens that is spoken of. It is further claimed that since priest and offering are represented as correlative terms, the one including the other, that Christ Who is Priest in heaven, must also offer in heaven and there offer *continually*. Whereas this context speaks of a High Priest that is *at present* ministering in heaven, it is claimed that it follows that the offering likewise relates to the present time. And if present, it is an offering that in one or other way is unceasingly brought by Christ. Now from other passages we learn that what Christ offered was His own body and blood, hence it is that, His own body and blood, that Christ is continually presenting to God in heaven.

As a counter-argument some writers have thought it sufficient to appeal to the aorist form *προσενέγκη* as proof that at the time Hebrews was written the offering was a thing of the past. They would then translate with Hofmann²⁾ "It is necessary that also this Man have somewhat that He has offered." It cannot be denied that such can be the meaning.³⁾ But that it must be the meaning can as little be proved. The question as to the real significance

1) In Hastings Bible Dictionary IV p. 348 Art. Sacrifice.

2) Schriftbeweis II : I p, 288.

3) Cf. Perowne p. 61.

of the phrase "to have somewhat to offer" must be decided not by a grammatical discussion of an ambiguous word but from the context. From this we learn that Hebrews deduces from the fact of the necessary correlation of Priest and oblation the general truth, that Christ must have something to offer. Whether that offering is past, present, or future, performed once for all, repeated oftentimes, or continuous, does not lie in the purpose, which this phrase in the context must serve. The purpose is merely to express the general truth that if the heavenly High Priest be a Priest, He must have an offering, since a priest without an offering is unthinkable. The context, however, gives us further reason, so it seems to me, to understand this statement of an offering *in heaven*. For the context speaks of the ministry of the heavenly High Priest, the Minister of the true tabernacle, Who is now at the right hand of God. And although the work on Calvary was heavenly in its nature, yet, it seems to me, to understand by this offering what Christ did on Calvary scarcely does full just justice to the context. For, as 8 : 4 indicates, Christ is conceived of not merely as heavenly, but as in heaven. And it would have served the author's apologetic aim but poorly to contrast with the earthly priests a Priest of the heavenly tabernacle who brought His sacrifice on Calvary. However, the further facts ; namely, when Christ brought His offering in heaven and how often and of how long a duration it was , what the "somewhat" was that He offered, are matters about which the author is here silent. Any conclusions about such facts, the verses 8 : 1—4 do not permit us to make. The author's opinion on these matters must be gathered from other passages.

And from these other passages we gain a definite idea. If we omit as foreign to our purpose 5 : 7, where it is said that Christ "in the days of His flesh offered up prayers and supplications", the passages in which the word "offer" and "offering" are used with reference to Christ are: 7 : 27, 9 : 13, 14 ; 9 : 24—28 ; 10 : 10—14. In 7 : 27 the author explicitly denies any activity in offering by Christ after He was made "higher than the heavens" ; i.e. after His exaltation at God's right hand. ¹⁾ And in all the other texts

1) Cf. Riggensbach in loc. p. 213. Delitzsch, Otto Schmitz p. 294.

cited the offering, as well when it refers to the offering in heaven as on Calvary is expressly said to have been once for all. A repeated sacrifice is therefore in direct contradiction to the author's express statements. And it seems to me it does not mend matters to say it is only *re-presented*. For the offering of Christ in heaven consists in nothing else than in the *presentation* to God, or if you will, of the application of His sacrifice on the cross. So that if we say that Christ *re-presented* His offering, it is the same as to say He *re-offered*. But Hebrews assures us that as well the part in heaven 9 : 25 as the part on Calvary 9 : 28 was not repeated but *once for all*.

As little as it can be repeated or represented can it be a *continuous, unceasing* offering. This we learn from 10 : 11, 12. We have there a contrast between the continuous, unceasing offering of the priests of the law, and the position of rest assumed by the New Testament High Priest after He brought His one offering for sin. Every one of those priests "*standeth daily* ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices," "but this Man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, *sat down* at the right hand of God." The point of contrast to be noticed is the *standing* of those priests and the *sitting down* of the heavenly High Priest. Standing is the attitude of one who is engaged in a service. Sitting down describes the attitude of one who rests after finished labor. To stand before the Lord (Deut. 10 : 18, 18 : 7) or before the ark of the covenant (Judges 20 : 28) or in the Lord's house was a set phrase to designate the sons of Aaron in their priestly activity. The very word for priest כֹּהֵן is derived from the standing to serve God.¹⁾ Christ in contrast with these Old Testament functionaries is not daily offering. His work as an Offerer, we are here told, is finished. Were it not so, it would have to have been said of Him as of those priests, that He *stands daily ministering*. But now that He sat down, He has left off bringing an offering for sin. He is now become a King upon His throne, dispensing by the Kingly power He as High Priest has, the blessings which the offering of eternal validity gives Him the right to bestow, and waiting there un till His triumphant return at the judgement. cf. 10 : 12, 13.

1) Cf. Perowne p. 67. Vos : Dogmatics II 256.

Quite the same idea of the completion of the offering is found in 1 : 3. "Who" we read, "after He had Himself made purification of sins," *sat down* on the right hand of the Majesty on high." There may be some dispute, whether the purification here relates to the sacrifice upon the cross or to the offering in heaven, or whether both are included. But this it at least teaches, the purification at which the offering of Christ aimed, was a thing of the past when Christ sat down at the right hand of Majesty, and this sitting down here as in 10 : 12 betokens the rest of our High Priest after the labor spent in offering. The same thought of cessation of the work of offering is implied in 7 : 27, where the event that He as the perfected High Priest was made "higher than the heavens," in other words that He came into the closest proximity to God by taking seat at His right hand upon the throne, is represented as being after He brought His offering.¹⁾

The book of Revelation has been appealed to, especially 5 : 6, as proof, that Christ is perpetually offering or re-presenting His offering in heaven. A brief investigation of those passages will therefore be necessary. But let it be said at the outset, that whatever evidence we gain from this book full of mysteries, can only be subsidiary to what Hebrews teaches. The symbolic language in which the thoughts of Revelation are wrapped, makes it impossible to speak with as much definiteness when making deductions from these symbols as in the case of other plain statements of scripture. However, though the evidence is subsidiary, yet I believe it yields positive confirmation of what Hebrews has already told us of the nature of the offering in heaven. — In 5 : 6 the scene is laid in heaven. The apostle John beheld the Lord God sitting upon His throne (5 : 1. Before that throne were the seven lamps of fire (4 : 5), representing the Holy Spirit. Surrounding the throne were the four beasts, the representatives of the redeemed creation (4 : 6 ff.) and the twentyfour elders seated, the representatives of the redeemed church of God (4 : 4). In the hand of Him that sat upon the throne lay the book of revelation of God's decree of the future.

¹⁾ Cf. on the duration of the offering in heaven Perowne, Chapter VI pp. 52—70.

When now John wept because there was found no one in heaven nor in earth worthy to open the book, in which the inheritance of God's people was sealed¹⁾, he was comforted by the sight of the Lamb, standing as if it had been slain, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders. Up to this time, though God the Father and the Holy Spirit were present, nowhere did John discover in the scene God the Son. And even now He is pictured to John not as in 3 : 21, seated upon the throne with the Father, but standing before it, and about to take the book from the hand of Him that sat upon the throne. — The representation of Christ as a Lamb points to the lamb of sacrifice, for it is said that the Lamb redeemed to God by its blood (5 : 9). The ἐσφαγμένον (5 : 6) then relates to the death of Christ upon the cross. The ὧς before ἐσφαγμένον indicates that we are to think of the exalted living Saviour from the point of view of His being the Crucified One.²⁾ But the point of dispute is, whether over and above this the phrase "standing as if slain" gives us just reason to infer that our heavenly High Priest is continually offering or re-presenting His offering before God. It has been inferred from the representation of the Lamb as slain, that the marks of the thorns on the brow and the woundprints in hands and feet and side are still visible in the glorified Saviour and that Christ is continually presenting these tokens of His sacrifice on Golgotha before God's throne. That the scene of Christ as a Lamb standing as if slain is meant to impress upon us the thought, that the character of Christ as One Who has given Himself as a sacrifice for sin on Golgotha, far from being forgotten, is a fact that lives on in undying remembrance before God, that the Selfsacrifice is the ground, upon which Christ can approach God's throne to take the book, to break open its seals, and apportion out the inheritance to God's children as written in that book, — that fact we would not venture to deny. But it is more than precarious to conclude from the fact that the Lamb stood as if it had been slain (perhaps with a gash in its throat as the sign of slaughter), which clearly symbolizes Christ's having given Himself

1) Cf. Hofmann p. 400.

2) Cf. Otto Schmitz p. 242.

in death, that Christ's glorified body still bears the woundprints, and that He is continually offering or re-presenting these to God. Nor does this follow from the fact, that the Lamb was *standing* as if slain before the throne. For in that case Revelation would contradict the testimony of Hebrews, where explicitly and in language not symbolical it is stated that this High Priest in distinction from the Aaronic priests does not stand, but sitteth after labors ended. Revelation would moreover contradict itself. For in 3 : 21 we hear our glorified Lord saying : "Even as I also overcame and *am set down* with My Father in His throne. The arrangement is purely symbolical, and is meant to symbolize not a perpetual state of things in heaven, but the fact of Christ's life, wherein is grounded the authority, upon which Christ in distinction from others could take and open the book. The standing of the Lamb does not mean to picture the attitude of Christ as offering, but in contradistinction to lying prostrate, which would suggest the idea, that its power were broken in death, to portray it as living in the fulness of power, as the seven horns also indicate. That Christ is in the vision standing before, not seated upon the throne, does not serve the purpose to describe Him as offering. For with as much reason we could conclude from 5 : 6 that the Holy Spirit, also placed *before the throne* took no part in the divine Rulership, but were also offering. Also the absense of an altar, either here or elsewhere in Revelation at which *Christ* is said to officiate, argues against a perpetual offering of Christ in heaven. Neither as the Lamb that was slain nor under any other title is our Lord associated with any of the altars mentioned in Revelation (cf. 6 : 9, 8 : 3). Nor do any of the other passages, where He is described as a Lamb, lend support to the theory of a perpetual sacrifice (Cf. 5 : 12, 7 : 14, 15 : 3, 21 : 22, 23, 27). All of which goes to prove that as little in Revelation as in Hebrews is there warrant to think of Christ as continually offering or re-presenting His offering in heaven, although as seen, there is ground for the contrary view.¹⁾

1) Cf. Bavinck : Dogmatiek III p. 545.

XII.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIEST.

From the fact that the heavenly High Priest after His session at the right hand of God no more brings an offering, does not follow, that He has ceased from all high priestly activity, or conversely that in order to be High Priest continually He must offer continually. For according to Hebrews the heavenly High Priest has more work to do than simply to offer. There is also the broad work of intercession, not to speak of the continual work of blessing ascribed to Him. In fact in point of duration of time the intercession characterizes the heavenly High Priest even more than does the offering. The latter was performed once for all, when this High Priest sat down at the right hand of Majesty. But the kind of High Priest Christ was from that time forth, now is, and forever shall be, is One "Who ever liveth to make intercession for us" (7 : 25). There is even a sense in which the entire work of the High Priest, the work of offering and the work of blessing as well, can be subsumed under the general term intercession. Characteristic of the work of a high priest is exactly that he intercedes for men with God. However, when commonly speaking of the intercession, we have in mind the high priestly work of Christ which is distinct from His offering and the work of benediction.

Of this work of intercession as it is commonly understood, we fail to find the prefiguration in any definite act, performed by the Aaronic high priest. We do find an analogy to the blessing which Christ bestows, in the high priestly benediction bestowed upon the people by the Aaronic high priest (cf. Nu. 6 : 22—27. Lev. 16 : 21,

22. Lev. 9 : 22, 23). There is no definite act, however, in the ritual of the Day of Atonement, corresponding to what is in Hebrews included under the intercession. The Aaronic high priest offered no prayer while in the most holy place, nor performed any other intercessory act there. The cloud of incense with which he filled the holy of holies cannot be interpreted as such. For it was designed to be, not a symbolic plea made in the basis of the offering of the blood, but a means of enveloping the mercy-seat in a cloud of smoke. Without the cloud of incense to hide Jehovah from view, the high priest could not perform his offering, since no man behold Jehovah and live. A closer parallel to Christ's intercession can be found in the incense, which according to the original instructions of the ritual (Exodus 30 : 1—9) the high priest was to burn upon the altar of incense every morning and evening. The burning of this incense was typical of the intercession of the appointed high priest (cf. Numbers 16 : 46, 47).¹⁾ Also from other passages of scripture we learn that the incense was symbolical of prayer. (cf. Psalm 141 : 2 ; Luke 1 : 10 ; Revelation 8 : 3—5). However, the reference is too remote to warrant the statement that in the incense burnt upon the altar of incense we have the specific Old Testament type of what Hebrews includes under the intercession of Christ. Nowhere do we find in Hebrews a comparison with any symbolic act of intercession of the Aaronic high priest as in the case of the offering. The author of Hebrews rather constructs his doctrine independant of the Old Testament ritual, though he may have had the altar of incense in mind when doing so (Cf. 9 : 4).²⁾

The Greek word used in Hebrews (7 : 25) to denote the intercessory activity of Christ (ἐντυγχάνειν) is in itself not ambiguous. Its root meaning³⁾ is to light upon, to fall in with a person or thing. From an examination of the contexts of the eight New Testament passages, in which the word occurs in one form or another⁴⁾ we learn that it signifies "to transact with one person in reference to another,

1) Cf. J. D. Davis : A Dictionary of the Bible. Art. Incense.

2) But cf. A. Kuyper Dictaten Dogmatiek III: De Intercessione Sacerdotalip. 147.

3) Cf. Thayer.

4) Acts 25 : 24, Romans 8 : 26, 34 ; 11 : 2 ; 1 Timothy 2 : 1 ; 4 : 5, Hebrews 7 : 25.

either making a statement "concerning" him (with περί), upon which certain proceedings ought to follow, or asking something "for" (ὕπέρ) him or "against" (κατά) him. It cannot be limited to prayer only, but includes "the whole series of transactions in which one person may engage with another on behalf of a third."¹⁾ The best rendering is the English word "intercession", a term of wider significance than "prayer".

But though the word itself is clear enough, it is a matter of much discussion, what the nature of the heavenly activity of Christ is, that is indicated by it. On the one hand there are commentators, who hold that the intercession of Christ is an "intercessio vocalis, verbalis et oralis."²⁾ It is then an *audible* prayer made by Christ as High Priest to the Father. On the other hand there are who affirm that ἐντυγχάνειν is a figurative expression to denote the abstract idea, that the fruits of Christ's offering once for all are constantly being applied to believers. Between these two extremes there lies a variety of opinions. Thus e.g. some³⁾ hold that Christ intercedes "by His presence on the Father's throne."⁴⁾ However it will not do as the second class holds, to interpret Christ's intercession as being an abstract notion. As Dr. Vos has stated it,⁵⁾ God's word does not comfort us with abstractions. And the passages in Hebrews and elsewhere, where this intercession is mentioned, do not suggest any such thought. We cannot even say with Wescott, that Christ intercedes by His mere presence on the Father's throne. There is a special activity answering to the ἐντυγχάνειν. Why otherwise would the author need to emphasize the fact, that Christ must undergo a course of training to become a merciful and faithful High Priest, if His mercy and faithfulness to His people were not expected to impel Him to acts of intercession as often as need be? Why in 4:15 the statement that "we have not a High Priest, Which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," if it were not that

1) Cf. Milligan p. 151 Wescott on 7:25.

2) Cf. Vos: Dogmatiek p. 185.

3) Of whom Wescott may be cited as a present day exponent.

4) Cf. Wescott Note p. 232.

5) Cf. Vos: Dictaten Dogmatiek Deel III Christologie p. 184.

His fellowfeeling did not incite Him to intercessory acts ? Or wherefore otherwise does the author urge believers (4 : 16) to come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace, seeing that we have a compassionate High Priest, if that compassion did not move Him to action ? There is an intercessory activity expressed by the ἐντυγχάνειν.

On the other hand we may not proceed as far in the opposite direction as those, who say that the intercession is "vocalis, verbalis, et oralis." Not as if that were impossible. But because Scripture, neither in Hebrews nor anywhere else, gives us ground for the statement. And whereas Christ's intercession is not only for the covenant people as a whole, but for each individual believer in his specific needs as well, it seems repugnant to our thought to conceive of this intercession in a realistic way as being an oral prayer. But to define positively the manner of Christ's intercession, is not possible. Hebrews not only, but the entire Scripture is silent on this theme. All that we can say is that it is an uninterrupted activity of the enthroned High Priest at the right hand of God as high priestly Mediator of His covenant people, through which He invokes for them from God the Father the blessings of salvation. But further than this we cannot go. It is true here as in the case of various other dogmas obtained from scripture, that where the divine and the human meet, we have a mystery.

The purpose for which this heavenly intercession takes place is by no means insignificant. It includes within its scope the *entire salvation of all believers*. Generally speaking, Christ is High Priest of the good things to come (9 : 11). All those, thus 7 : 25 tells us, that come to God by Him, He is able to save, because He intercedes for them. And never will any New Testament covenant believer, we are there told, have to return emptyhanded from this High Priest, for unto the uttermost end of time He can save, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.¹⁾

But not only the ultimate salvation of all believers forms the burden of Christ's intercession, but as well the *daily help of indivi-*

1) Cf. on 7 : 25 chapter IV.

dual believers in their various temptations and struggles with sin. According to 2 : 17, 18 Christ succors His brethren in their temptations to sin and unbelief. Similarly in 4 : 15, 16 the readers are admonished to come boldly to the throne of God. God's throne is now a throne whence grace proceeds ever since the interceding High Priest is there at God's right hand (Cf. 12 : 2, 8 : 1). God Himself is through this High Priest rendered merciful, compassionate, and at that throne as a result of the compassionate High Priest, the believer can find the gracious gifts, which are the fruit of God's goodwill to him. The grace which the believer is said to receive is not a general boon for his whole life. But it is grace "for timely help." As often as he is smitten by temptations, and approaches God's throne for aid in them, a timely grace can there be had to tide him through. And it is the compassion of our interceding High Priest, aroused by the believers' temptations (4 : 15) which moves Him to secure from God this periodic help.¹⁾

But the intercession is still wider in its scope. Not only the ultimate salvation and the individual help of believers in the trials of their faith, but also that which the believers bring *to God*, their prayers, their entire intercourse with God is mediated by this living, interceding High Priest. In 13 : 15 we read : "By Him" — and these words are emphatic in the sentence — the believer must offer the sacrifices of praise to God. Just as through this High Priest (13 : 12) the readers were sanctified, placed in a new covenant relation to God, thus also alone through Him, and not through the medium of the Old Testament ritual, can their sacrifice of praise be acceptable to God. The interceding High Priest according to this text it is, that brings our prayers as well as our praise and thanksgiving to God.²⁾ And from 13 : 20, 21 we gather the thought that through Jesus Christ the glorified, God makes the believers perfect in every good thing to do His will. In other words the entire path of sanctification and the service of God is mediated by the living, interceding High Priest.

1) Cf. Riegenbach, Lünemann.

2) Cf. Riegenbach, Riehm.

In short the believer's entire communion with God — though the way to this communion was opened by Christ's offering (cf. e.g. 9 : 12, 10 : 19) — as well the spiritual blessings which he must have from God, as what he brings to God, must and can only be through the mediation of the interceding High Priest in heaven. The living, exalted Christ is still as He was on earth, the only Way to the Father.

What now is the relation of this intercessory activity of Christ to His offering ? It has been asserted¹⁾ that nowhere is the relation pointed out in Hebrews between the continual intercession of Christ and the first priestly entrance into heaven with His blood and the rendering effective of His work of atonement before God. If by this is meant that Hebrews contains no explicit statement to that effect, I believe it to be true. Notwithstanding, it can scarcely be denied, that to Hebrews there is a very close connection between the two. For as has already been pointed out elsewhere, the fact that (9 : 12) the New Testament High Priest entered heaven "through δαί His blood" signifies, that without having died, He could not have entered the heavenly Most Holy Place. That He entered the heavenly Holy Place to be there engaged as our High Priest — not merely in the work of presenting His offering, but in that of intercession and blessing as well — seems to be a patent fact. But if He as High Priest could not enter the heavenly tabernacle without having sacrificed Himself in death, if in other words He could not engage upon the business of the high priesthood in heaven without having died, what other relation can there be than that the atoning death of Christ is the forensic ground, upon which the intercession is based, or otherwise stated, the condition set by God to be fulfilled before it was possible for this High Priest to approach God's throne as our interceding High Priest. The same thought is presented under another figure in 9 : 15 ff. where the death of the Testator is affirmed to be necessary in order to the receiving of the eternal inheritance. Which eternal inheritance (7 : 25) is secured for the heirs through the intercessory activity of the heavenly High Priest.

1) Thus e. g. Kübel in Strack und Zöckler's Commentar on Hebrews 7 : 25.

Again in 10 : 19 ff. the believers can only enter the Holiest, where God's throne is and whence he must procure his blessings of salvation, by the blood of Jesus and through the rent veil of Christ's flesh. Now whereas the believer's blessings are always mediated through the interceding High Priest, the implication is that Christ is allowed to intercede in heaven, because He offered Himself on Calvary. Of the eternal intercession, the offering once for all is eternally the *conditio sine qua non*.

It is, however, on the other hand inaccurate to say that the intercession consists in the bringing into remembrance or the rendering effective of the sacrifice on Calvary. Such can be said of the presentation of the offering by Christ at His entrance into heaven, not, however, of the intercession. For nowhere are the ethical blessings of salvation represented as results of Christ's sacrifice. All the results, which the offering of Christ is said to have had, relate to the annihilation of the guilt of sin and the readjustment of right covenant relations with God. More than this that offering is not said to have accomplished. The offering of Christ is nowhere in Hebrews represented as the meritorious cause of the blessings of salvation. These are all said to be the direct result of Christ's heavenly intercession.

We may then ask : Has the intercession with the blessing of salvation it procures, no meritorious ground whatsoever in Christ's work on earth ? Does Christ in His intercession plead for His people as an humble Suppliant Who has no ground of merit upon which He can expect an answer to His petition ? By no means ! If that were the case, Hebrews would not be in harmony with the statements of Scripture elsewhere. For in the high priestly prayer recorded in John XVII in the twenty-fourth verse our Lord says : "Father, *I will* $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am"¹). These are not words of an humble petitioner, who has nothing to ask, but of One Who can lay claim to being heard. The "Father I will" places beyond a doubt that this is the

1) Cf. on the meaning of $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ Thayer : A. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament 1889. H. Cremer : Biblisch-theologisches Wörterbuch der Neutest. Gräcität. 1893.

appeal of One Who has the authority to demand what He petitions for. And if with Trench we can go so far as to say that ἐρωτάω implies a certain equality between the parties indicated, then also in John 17 : 9, 15, 20 the same thought meets us as in 17 : 24. Christ has finished the work on earth, which the Father gave Him to do 17 : 4, can now ask as His boon flowing from this finished work, that the Father glorify Him 17 : 5, and also that they whom the Father hath given Him be with Him where He is (17 : 24).

The representation in Hebrews is no different than in the Gospel of John. Neither in Hebrews is the intercession dissociated from the work on earth. Already the fact pointed out above, that the heavenly High Priest, laden with the sins of His people, could not enter heaven and intercede before these sins were annihilated by His offering, and covenant union with God established¹⁾ proves, even though we cannot say that the offering was the meritorious ground of the blessings of the intercession, how very closely the intercession is bound up with the work on earth.

The relation, however, it seems to me, is still closer. The blessings themselves, which flow from the heavenly intercession are represented as being merited by Christ's work on earth, albeit not by His offering. It is the *perfect obedience* rendered to God by Christ on earth in His capacity as High Priest, that is represented as the meritorious cause of the blessings of salvation. It is the τελείωσις of Christ viewed from its positive side, the learning obedience, which is said to have earned for us the blessings of salvation. (cf. e.g. 5 : 8—10).

In order to understand how Hebrews can ascribe the right to the blessings of salvation secured through the intercession, to the earthly obedience of this High Priest, we must let pass in review before our minds the position of the covenant people before God. The covenant according to Hebrews in one of its aspects is the realization of religious ideals and as such it is an end in itself.²⁾ Centrally conceived these religious ideals can ultimately be resolved into this one fact : Perfect union with the blessed God. Just as for

1) Cf. above pp. 186, 187.

2) Cf. Vos : Pr. Th. Rev. 1907. The Priesthood of Christ in Hebrews p. 439 f.

unfallen man salvation consisted in perfect union with His Creator, thus also the ideal of religion as represented by the covenant consists in perfect union with God. This is the representation of the covenant given us in the citation from Jeremiah 31 : 34 found in Hebrews 8 : 10. Jehovah the God of Israel, and they His people. This is the highest ideal of religion. In this union with God the entire salvation of believers is summed up. In this sense the covenant represents religion arrived at its goal. A representation of the covenant more frequently found is that it is the institution established by God to bring about this union with God. In this sense the covenant is the means whereby the covenant in the first sense is realized. Back of the covenant in this latter aspect lie *the promises of God* (6 : 12, 8 : 6, 9 : 12). To bring about the fulfillment of these promises made to Abraham (cf. 6 : 13 ff.) was the purpose as well of the Old Testament covenant that dated from Sinai (So Hebrews), as of the New Testament covenant in this latter aspect. The divine condition for remaining in the state of salvation or in the covenant in the first sense, or otherwise stated, the condition set for inheriting the promises of the covenant taken in the second sense is *perfect obedience*. This fact is written across the face of the whole epistle. The entire discussion on sin and sacrifice bespeaks disobedience as the cause of the broken covenant and of the non-attainment of the promised inheritance. In 8 : 1 obedience to God is indicated as the condition of the covenant when the Lord said : "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." The people's obedience and the Lord's being their God, are related to one another as cause and effect. The same thought is negatively expressed in the preceding verse (9 : 9), where it is said, that the people of Israel "continued not in My covenant and — as a result — I regarded them not". Perfect obedience to Him was the condition, upon which God bound Himself in the covenant to fulfill His gracious promises and give the eternal inheritance of salvation, through union with Him. (Cf. Also the discourse on the inheritance of the promises in chapter VI). Therefore, if the covenant people had rendered this perfect obedience, they would have been able to *lay*

claim to the inheritance of salvation, on the basis of the gracious promises of God.

This obedience the Old Testament covenant people did not render. They did not in other words continue in the covenant, whereby they might have secured for themselves salvation through continued union with God (8 : 9). Should now the promised salvation still fall within the reach of the Old Testament people, a double duty devolved upon the high priestly representatives of those covenant people. By sacrifices they must abolish the sins and restore the broken covenant relation with God (5 : 1; 8 : 3), and further by perfect obedience in their high priestly capacity as the representatives of those covenant people secure for them the promised salvation — the reward of obedience. But this they failed to accomplish. Of the law (7 : 19), of the priesthood (7 : 11), and of the covenant (8 : 9 ; 7 : 22) it is claimed that they perfected nothing. The "perfecting" in these passages has reference to the restoration of the sinful people to perfect covenant relation with God by the abolition of sin. Of the other side of the task devolving upon the high priestly representative of the covenant people ; namely the securing the promises of salvation for the sinful people by a perfect obedience¹), little or nothing is said. All we are told is that they were sinful and by reason thereof needed to atone for their own as well as for the people's sins (7 : 27, 28). The reason for this silence seems obvious. The perfect high priestly representative obedience was not as was the sacrifice a specific function, performed at regular intervals, but rather a state covering the entire life.

But what the high priestly representatives of the Old Testament covenant people could not secure, the High Priest of the new covenant has secured. He by His one atonement offering has obtained eternal redemption from the guilt of sin (9 : 12) and has by that offering perfected forever the sanctified ; i.e. placed them again in perfect covenant relation with God (10 : 14).

But Christ did more. He not only by His offering righted wrong covenant relations, the entire doctrine of the τελείωσις of

1) Cf. Duty of an ideal high priest. chapter II.

Christ from its positive side, aims to tell us how Christ became a perfect Author (2 : 10) and Cause (5 : 9) of Salvation. The negative side of the *τελείωσις*, the learning of sympathy in temptations, does not interest us here. But the positive side, the learning obedience does. This learning obedience, as seen elsewhere, does not refer to a development in Christ to moral perfection in His personal life.¹⁾ But it means that, endowed from the very beginning with moral perfection, He was made a perfect, a consummated High Priest by His steadfast obedience to God. In His official capacity as high priestly Representative of His people He was perfected.

The life of Christ on earth is in the *τελείωσις* represented as a period of probation for Christ (5 : 9 ; 7 : 26). In it He, the high priestly Representative of the covenant people, was called upon to render a perfect obedience. And when after a life of unswerving obedience *amidst the severest test that life could give*, that of trials, sufferings, and death, the period of probation was brought to a successful close, (5 : 9), and He was translated to the heavenly sphere, where disobedience is out of the question, (7 : 26), He became the perfected High Priest. The obedience spoken of in the *τελείωσις* of Christ is not to be confounded with the obedience to the will of God to die, which (10 : 10) gave to Christ's sacrifice its ethical value. That of the *τελείωσις* is rather obedience to God's law in general. However, this obedience was "learned", most vitally tested in the pathway of trials, suffering, and death which He had to undergo²⁾ That by His representative obedience in His official capacity He earned for His people the reward placed upon obedience in the covenant ; namely salvation, we learn from 5 : 8, 9. Being made perfect High Priest through having rendered a perfect obedience He became Cause (*αἵτιος*) of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. His obedience, the procuring cause of salvation, is the thought of this important passage. In our Reformed Dogmatics we affirm that the second Adam, in order to gain salvation, had to restore what the first Adam had corrupted. And He had to bring what the first Adam did not ; namely, a perfect obedience.

1) Cf. pp. 57 ff.

2) Cf. on 5 : 7—10 pp. 20, 21, 57.

This thought translated into the language of Hebrews means that the High Priest, in order to secure for His people the blessings of salvation, must by His offering restore what they had corrupted; i.e. the covenant union. And by His representative obedience as High Priest He must gain the right to the promises of the covenant; i.e. eternal life in union with the covenant God.

Christ's heavenly intercession is therefore not to be dissociated from His work on earth. His intercession is exactly the bringing to fruition of His high priestly work on earth. By His sacrifice He removed sin and restored the broken covenant union (10 : 10, 14), and thus *made it possible* for Himself to enter the Most Holy Place in His official capacity as High Priest and to *be allowed* to appear before God for us (9 : 12, 24). And by His representative obedience He gained the right to salvation, which God graciously promised in the covenant as the reward of obedience. He can therefore indeed be called the Surety of a better covenant (7 : 22), the Guarantee that its conditions will be fulfilled.

The intercession is not of the nature of a petition of one, who can lay claim to nothing. But just as in John XVII the interceding High Priest Who has finished the work on earth, which the Father gave Him to do, can say: "Father, I will" (17 : 4, 24); so here that same High Priest, Who by His intercession secures the blessings of salvation, is the One Who by His earthly obedience became Cause of that eternal salvation (5 : 9).

Nevertheless, albeit that Christ has earned the right to the blessings by His earthly obedience, the fact remains, and after the brief excursus on the covenant it comes to us with redoubled force, that the blessings of salvation are the direct result of Christ's *intercession*. As well the help to the individual believer as the ultimate salvation of the entire covenant people is directly due to Christ's *intercession*. The salvation to which the work on earth gained the right, is not to be conceived of as concrete entity, having a separate existence apart from God, which the High Priest-King at the right hand of God is now piecing out to each believer in turn. Salvation to Hebrews consists in perfect *union with God*. Now it is exactly the business of the interceding High Priest, Who is

the only Way to the Father, to obtain from God through the channel of His intercession, as often and as much as is necessary, the various blessings of salvation. Hebrews knows nothing of the representation, which conceives of the grand work of intercession as a mere appendix to Christ's high priestly labors on earth, so that, as far as the ultimate salvation is concerned, this appendant work in heaven might as appropriately have been left off. Without the intercession no man can be saved ! Christ saves *exactly by intercession* (7 : 25). If once we understand what Hebrews tells us, that salvation can only exist in union with the blessed God, and that this union is alone mediated through our *interceding* High Priest, then it is evident, why Hebrews lays such stress as he does on Christ's high priestly activity in heaven. After earning His right to the salvation of those whom His high priestly work is said to benefit, by His work on earth, our Lord did not rest from His high priestly labors, and sit down at the right hand of God as a High Priest *sine cura*, in order as King to apportion out salvation. Had Christ rested as High Priest, even after the great work on earth was done, not a man would be saved. But ever since the first Ascension Day, throughout all ages our everliving High Priest is actively engaged in saving His people by gaining for them in His intercession the blessings that flow from union with God. His intercession is forever the channel through which the blessings of salvation flow from God to usward (7 : 25). Indeed, mindful of the fact, that Christ is by His intercession (7 : 25) saving His people, to which to be sure the work on earth had given Him the God-given right, but nothing more than the right, we can well understand, why Hebrews lays such stress on the heavenly work and can even in various places represent the work on earth as in a sense *preparatory* to His priesthood.

This heavenly intercession is for the benefit of all the members of the new covenant. And for them only . All those who do not hold fast the Christian confession (3 : 1, 4 : 14), who do not go to God by Him (7 : 25), who do not belong to the household of God (10 : 21), are not included. Christ is High Priest of the new covenant (12 : 24). His high priesthood *ipso facto* cannot therefore extend either in

the blessings it conveys or in the persons whom it benefits farther than the limits of that covenant. Just as the Old Testament high priest could only officiate for those who either by birth or initiation into the covenant were members of that covenant, so also Christ can alone officiate for those of the covenant whose High Priest He is. Even for the Judaists, that still clung to the Old Testament ritual after it had lost its divine sanction by the introduction of the new covenant (8 : 13), Christ cannot intercede. For in 4 : 14 the readers are admonished to hold fast to the Christian confession as the only way for them to benefit of the work of this great High Priest. On the other hand the believers under the Old covenant Christ's high priestly intercession did benefit. The references to the Melchizedek High Priest, to Whom the faith of the Israelite was directed (Cf. Psalm 110 : 4 Hebrews 7 : 11) as the One destined to do for them what the Aaronic high priest could not do, the redemption procured by His death for the transgressions under the first covenant (9 : 15), and the perfecting of the Old Testament faithful through Christ (11 : 40) leaves no doubt in this matter.

Entirely in harmony with the presentation of Hebrews is that of the apostles Paul and John. According to the former the intercession is for the elect of God (Romans 8 : 34). And in the high priestly prayer recorded in the Gospel of John XVII, our Lord both positively and negatively defines for whom He intercedes, when He says regarding those whom God gave Him out of the world : "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for those which Thou hast given Me." Against these definite expressions in Hebrews, in Paul, and in John where the heavenly intercession is limited to : the "covenant people," the elect, "those whom the Father has given" Christ, cannot be argued, that Luke 23 : 34 broadens out this intercession so as to include all people under it. For the prayer there recorded does not form a part of the specific of heavenly intercession done on the basis of His offering. Of this latter intercession the texts cited above distinctly state, that it is only for the covenant people, not for the world. What Luke 23 : 34 alone does teach is that Christ while on earth did intercede in *another manner* for His enemies.

When did Christ's high priestly intercession begin ? It is a faulty notion, that Christ's intercession *began* with His session at the right hand of God. Just as Christ became perfectly-formed High Priest upon His entrance into the heavenly tabernacle (6 : 20) after His career on earth was ended, (5 : 9, 7 : 28), but yet was High Priest as well on earth (9 : 25), so that even His coming into the world can be viewed as a priestly act (10 : 9), so also it is with His intercession. The perfectly-formed Intercessor He became first when, after presenting Himself as a full atonement offering for sin, He took seat at the right hand of God. 9 : 24, 7 : 25 God's throne thence became a throne of grace, since the sympathetic High Priest Who had passed through the heavens there appeared in the presence of God for us (4 : 14—16). Christ's intercession as seen above is an intercession clothed with *authority*, which was gained through the high priestly activity on earth. It can therefore *in logical order* only begin when that work upon which it is based, is finished. Hence Hebrews nowhere speaks of an intercession of our Lord except one, that is performed in the heavenly tabernacle after the offering once for all was completed (9 : 24). The same mode of representation is given by the apostle Paul in Romans 8 : 34, where in logical order are summed up the sacrificial death, the resurrection, the session at God's right hand, and the intercession. Likewise in Acts 2 : 33 the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost is represented as following upon Christ's being exalted at the right hand of God.

This mode of representation, however, in no way precludes the possibility of Christ's interceding already on earth. Just as Christ was already King while on earth (John 18 : 37), and became so when He took seat at God's right hand (Romans 8 : 34), so also it is nothing contradictory to say that Christ was already an interceding High Priest on earth, and became so ; i.e. the perfectly-formed Intercessor only after He sat down on the right hand of Majesty. Accordingly we find repeated mention of intercessory prayers of our Lord while on earth, as well for His church as a whole (Cf. John XVII), as for particular individual needs (Cf. Luke 22 : 32, Isaiah 53 : 13, John 11 : 41, 42). Already the intercession on earth

was an authoritative interceding based on His (still unfinished) work on earth. (cf. John 17 : 24). However, in the mental attitude He assumed, as well as in the outward form of these prayers, the intercession on earth, in line with the state of humiliation Christ was in, assumed the form of a humble petitioner (Cf. John. 11 : 41, 42).

But we must date the beginning of Christ's intercession still further back than His incarnation. We have above pointed out¹⁾ that throughout the entire Old Testament period, ever since the Fall, Christ, the eternal High Priest, exercised His high priestly functions. As proof for the intercessory activity of our Lord during the Old Testament Isaiah 63 : 9 and Zacharia 1 : 12 are usually pointed to. From these passages it appears that in all the afflictions of Israel Christ was afflicted, and that the "Angel of the Lord" interceded for Jerusalem. However, as has been indicated above²⁾ the Levitical priests were the official organs through which the one High Priest appointed in the eternal Council of Peace to work out the redemption of man, exercised His high priestly office. Therefore in the intercessory activities of these official organs of Christ's priesthood we have the *chief* proof of the intercession of our Lord during the old covenant. (Cf. Ex. 30 : 1—9; Nu. 16 : 46—47 Ps. 141 : 2; Joel 2 : 17; Luke 1 : 10).³⁾

The intercession of the heavenly High Priest is unending. In 7 : 25 we read that the ever-living High Priest can save *to the uttermost*. As previously indicated, the temporal idea is emphasized. Even at the end of time no believer will be disappointed in this High Priest, for He will even then be in function, living forever to make intercession for him. According to 9 : 28 He will even exercise His high priestly functions at the judgement. For in 9 : 28 He is pictured not in His capacity as Judge in the name of God, but *as High Priest*. He will be there to secure salvation for those that look for Him. He will appear as High Priest to give salvation in its completest sense to those that here with the hope of faith have looked for Him.⁴⁾

1) Cf. Chapter VI.

2) Cf. Chapter VI.

3) Cf. A. Kuyper : Dictaten Dogmatiek III Loc. De Christo (Pars Tertia) pp. 148, 149.

4) Cf. Riggenbach.

The question, however, comes, will Christ exercise His high priestly functions, in particular His intercession, also after the parousia ? There is nothing in Hebrews that forbids our thinking so. True, the help in the temptations and trials of faith, the preservation from the enemies (2 : 18, 4 : 15, 16, 13 : 20) will then no longer be necessary, whereas all God's adversaries will then be destroyed (10 : 27), and the full σωτηρία will then be the possession of all the covenant people (9 : 28). Nevertheless, after the parousia no more than before, is the salvation to be thought of as an objectively existing entity, but as a state arising from union with the blessed God. And this union is to Hebrews always mediated by the *interceding* High Priest. This holds true as well for the blessings of eternity as for those of time. An indication that the intercession lasts throughout eternity we have in 7 : 24, 25. There the author deduces from the eternity of the Person of our High Priest the truth of an unending intercession, and draws from this fact the comfort which believers in this life need from it ; namely, that never any believer will be unable even when time draws to a close, to receive salvation from Him. But if the unending intercession is a natural corollary of the eternity of His Person, then it follows that Christ is through all eternity an interceding High Priest. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

XIII.

THE BENEDICTION OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIEST.

The benediction of the heavenly High Priest is the witness to the divine answer to the intercession, and the proof of its efficacy. In the intercession Christ draws nigh *to God* for His people ; in the benediction He comes *from God* to His people with the procured benediction. These blessings do not spring from Christ as *their Source*. All blessings ultimately come from God (James 1 : 17). It is needful for a right understanding of the position of Christ as the heavenly High Priest of the new covenant, to keep in mind that He is as such in Hebrews conceived of as not more than Mediator, the Channel through which we approach God, the Fountain of Blessings, and through which these divine blessings flow to us. Christ, according to Hebrews, can save to the uttermost, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us (7 : 25).

This benediction finds its prefiguration in the ceremonial cultus of the Old Testament. After the first offerings of Aaron on the occasion of his consecration to office, we read that Aaron "lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them" (Lev. 9 : 22). The priestly benediction of Numbers 6 : 22—27 was pronounced regularly after the morning and evening sacrifices, as if it were the fruits of the offering just made.¹⁾ When on the Day of Atonement Israel's sins were expiated and the broken covenant relation was symbolically restored, Israel proceeded to hold the Feast of Tabernacles. This was the feast of the ingathering of the harvest²⁾, while at the same time it was commemorative of past deliverances, and,

1) Cf. N. Dimock : Our one High Priest on High, 1910 p. 79.

2) Cf. Ex. 23 : 16 ; 34 : 22 ; Lev. 23 : 39 ; Deut. 16 : 13, 15.

at least as celebrated in later times, it was an earnest of future blessings.¹⁾ This feast produced a joy so great, that it was said that he who knew not its joy knew not what joy was. Likewise, after expiation of sins has been made by the New Testament High Priest, and right covenant relations with God have been restored, the Israel of God can enter upon its Feast of Tabernacles and in the dispensation of grace in the Holy Spirit can enter upon the enjoyment of blessings, the joy of which the Old Testament believer has never known (Zech. 14 : 16).

The high priestly work of benediction is closely related to the kingship of Christ. As King Christ governs, guides, and helps His people in their infirmities, protects them from their enemies, and leads them to the destined salvation. But this same work of Christ as King can also be contemplated as part of His high priesthood. These two can be logically distinguished, but not separated. The kingly activity of Christ, at least insofar as it relates to believers, coincides with the benediction of Him as High Priest, the viewpoint taken making out the difference. The kingship is by Hebrews represented as being tributary to the priesthood. (Cf. 1 : 3 ; 7 : 1, 2, 8 : 1). The reason for this is because the Christology of Hebrews is governed by the idea of Christ as High Priest.²⁾ The fact that the kingship is subservient to the high priesthood is the highest guarantee that the high priesthood is and will always be fully efficacious. For this very reason, no doubt, Hebrews can regard the statement in 8 : 1 relating to the royal power, as the copestone of the discourse on the excellencies of the Melchizedek High Priest. "In the things we are saying" thus we read in 8 : 1 "the crowning statement is that we have such a High Priest, Who sat down at the right hand of the throne of Majesty."³⁾ As the everliving, interceding High Priest, Christ petitions for help in the trials of our faith, and for the blessings of salvation. And in the royal rule

1) Cf. Lev. 23 : 43 ; Hos. 12 : 9 ; Isa. 12 : 3. Cf. J. D. Davis : A Dictionary of the Bible, 1911 Art. : Feast of Tabernacles.

2) Cf. Riehm p. 614.

3) Cf. Revised Version on 8 : 1.

which He as High Priest enjoys, He has received from God the authority and power to carry out those things which He petitions for in His intercession. Higher guarantee that the heavenly high priesthood accomplishes what it intends, cannot be conceived. Thus the high priesthood of the new covenant forms a striking contrast with the ineffectual priesthood of the old covenant, with whom this power was lacking.

What are the blessings which the heavenly High Priest bestows ? In answering this question we can be brief. Hebrews does not speak of them at length, and moreover the texts which do contain references to this work of benediction have already largely been discussed in the preceding chapter. Hebrews 7 : 25 describes this work as the saving of every believer to the end of time. According to 9 : 28, just as the Aaronic high priest on the Day of Atonement entered the holiest with his expiatory offering and came back to bless the atoned for people who were waiting in the court, thus also Christ, Who has gone into the heavenly Holiest with His offering, will at the Judgement Day return as High Priest, to give full and final salvation to those who have had the eye of faith fixed upon His return from the heavenly Tabernacle. But not only the ultimate salvation, but as well the help of individual believers, is represented as a blessing received from Christ. Amidst the weaknesses of his sinful flesh, in the manifold battles with temptation, in his trials of faith, the Christian, according to 4 : 16, has in Jesus, the Son of God, a High Priest, Who procures for him the divine grace and mercy for timely help. From 13 : 20, 21 we learn that the spiritual powers, whereby the Christian is enabled to do good works, and to perform whatever is wellpleasing in the sight of God, is mediated "through Jesus Christ." In other words the spiritual strength received in sanctification comes through the mediation of our Lord Jesus.

One more blessing — and we would call it the chief — of the benediction of Christ must be mentioned. It is that of the Holy Spirit. Of this gift Hebrews does not make mention. This silence will appear nothing strange, if we bear in mind that to Hebrews religion is conceived of specifically as a covenant relation, and

that consequently the conscious exercise of fellowship with the covenant God is emphasized. Notwithstanding, the gift of the Holy Spirit may with propriety be termed the principal blessing which this High Priest bestows, whereas it embraces in itself everything that the believer needs. By the Holy Spirit Christ strengthens His people to do every good work. By this Spirit He leads them on the way of sanctification. By this Spirit He empowers them to battle in temptation with the spiritual adversaries. And by this Spirit He brings them to the enjoyment of salvation. From this Spirit come the diversity of gifts which the believers receive (Cf. I Cor. 12 : 4—11). To this gift the Old Testament prophets looked forward as one of the greatest, which the Messianic age would bring (Joel 2 : 28 ; Acts 2 : 17 ff.). And this is the great spiritual gift, which New Testament writers associate with the New Testament dispensation (John. 7 : 39 ; Rom. 8 : 11 ; Eph. 1 : 13, 4 : 30). Our Lord Himself marks this gift as the principle one which He will bestow (John 14 : 16, 15 : 26). He arouse the languored hopes of His disciples at His departure with the promise of the Holy Spirit as Comfortor. (John 16 : 7). It was for this gifts that He admonished His disciples to wait at Jerusalem (Acts 1 : 4), and it was this gift which provoked the great joy of Pentecost. (Acts 2 : 1 ff.). Our Lord associates this gift with His exaltation and heavenly intercession. According to John 14 : 16 our Lord promised His disciples after His departure to pray the Father for the Spirit of Truth. And John 7 : 39 tells us that , when Christ was on earth, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The fact that the Holy Spirit was first given to the church after our Lord's exaltation, does not imply that the Holy Ghost did not make His presence known to the church of the Old Testament. The examples of Moses (Nu. 11 : 17) and Joshua (Deut. 34 : 9), of Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2 : 9—15), and of David (I Sam. 16 : 13) upon whom the Spirit of God is said to have rested, is proof enough to the contrary. To understand the nature of this gift which comes from our exalted Lord through His intercession, we must view the high priestly work of Christ in its relation to the

eternal Council of Peace.¹⁾ In that eternal Council of Peace, thus scripture represents it, to the Son were made certain demands, upon the fulfillment of which He would receive certain promises. Among other things He was to yield Himself as a Sacrifice for sin, be Jehovah's Servant, whereby God would reconcile the world unto Himself, and redeem the people of God back to God. And among the promises given to the Son was also this one, that He would receive, from God the Father the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, to carry out His work of redemption in sanctification. The Holy Spirit was to become specifically the Spirit of *Jesus*. He Himself was to be anointed with this Spirit. And this selfsame Spirit was, as the promised reward of Christ's redemptive work, to be poured forth into the hearts of the members of His spiritual body. The Holy Spirit was to become the Agent of Christ, sent forth by Him, whereby Christ would continue His work in sanctification. By the fulfillment of the conditions of the eternal Council of Peace, therefore, a very close union has resulted for Christ as the Anointed One with the Holy Spirit of God. The union is so close that the New Testament can at times speak of the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of His Son," and "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Cf. Gal. 4 : 6; Phil. 1 : 19), and can even say: "The Lord is that Spirit." (Cf. 11 Cor. 3 : 17). But I need not pursue this line of thought any farther. The problem connected with this subject requires far more study than I have given to it. For the purpose of this dissertation it suffices to have indicated that the Holy Spirit, the great benediction of Christ to His church on earth, has as a reward for the fulfillment of the conditions of the eternal Council of Peace, become specifically "the Spirit of the Son", and as such forms the blessing which the exalted Lord secured through His intercession.²⁾

In conclusion the question of the *duration* of Christ's high priestly benediction must be answered. Christ, the heavenly, Melchizedek High Priest, is a *soteriological* High Priest. This might lead us to

1) Cf. Chapter VI.

2) For the scriptural ground for the statements made in this paragraph; consult the discussion of the Council of Peace in the Dogmatics of H. Bavinck. A. Kuyper, G. Vos.

conclude that when the last believer shall have been redeemed and time shall be no more, then the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ will cease. There will then no longer be any help to give in infirmities, no strength to give in the manifold trials of faith, and full salvation will then be the possession of all the redeemed alike. But as already indicated in the previous chapter, Hebrews gives us no reason for supposing that the high priestly activity of Christ will one day cease. (Cf. Hebrews 7 : 25). The redemption which Christ secures is an *eternal* redemption (9 : 12). Salvation throughout all eternity will rest in the redemptive work of Christ, and be mediated by the interceding High Priest. As Dr. Vos has pointedly stated it : "The saints above breathe forever the atmosphere of grace."¹)

1) Cf. G. Vos : Art. Hebrews, the Epistle of the diatheke, in Pr. Th. Rev. 1916 p. 29.

XIV.

THE TEACHING OF HEBREWS AND VARIOUS VIEWS ON THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

In this chapter I want to discuss the bearing, which the results to which I have arrived in the foregoing chapters, have on various views relating to the high priesthood of Christ. First of all I want to point to the substantial agreement of the Reformed doctrine on the subject with the view which Hebrews presents. The emphasis laid in Hebrews upon our High Priest's divinity as well as upon His humanity, is also characteristic of the Reformed doctrine. Christ to the latter was High Priest according to both natures, the divine and the human. The view of the Socinians and of „modern” theologians, that Christ was not more than man, whatever also can be said of it, is at least in discord with the teaching of Hebrews. To this epistle the perfect High Priest, Who must be taken from among men (5 : 1, 8 : 3), must at the same time be a perfect, eternal Being, to give a corresponding validity to His offering, and to be able forever to intercede¹). None but the eternal Son of God could satisfy this demand. (7 : 15, 16 cf. 7 : 3 ; 7 : 28; 9 : 14 ; 10 : 9, 10). Again, the Reformed view that Christ was High Priest not only in His passive, but also in His active obedience, not only in heaven but also on earth, accords strictly with the view presented in Hebrews. Likewise the teaching that atonement with God was secured for man by satisfaction rendered to God through the death of Christ as a penal substitution for sinful man, is a teaching that squares with that of Hebrews. The tendency

1) Cf. chapters III and VIII.

of several present day theologians, in line with the Socinian teaching, to find the essence of our Lord's sacrifice in His life of obedience to God's law in general, and to transfer the offering as regards all its vital parts to heaven, lacks the necessary support from Hebrews.¹⁾ Not only the application of the atonement by the offering in heaven (9 : 12, 23), but as well the suffering and death, form an indispensable element of Christ's one offering for sin (9 : 14, 15, 26, 28 ; 10 : 10, 20). And this one offering, insofar as it relates to earth, cannot be broadened out so as to include the entire consecrated life of Christ under it, but is limited by Hebrews to what took place on Calvary.²⁾ It was there that our Lord procured atonement by wiping out the debt of sin (9 : 28). Furthermore, the necessity for our salvation, that Christ be continually at the right hand of God in heaven to intercede, which fact is emphasized throughout Hebrews, has alike found recognition in Reformed dogmatics. The epistle on the other hand is in direct conflict with the theory of a millenium. "A correct conception of Christ's priestly intercession is inconsistent with the dream of a reign of Christ on earth. It may, or may not, be consistent with His kingly office. But His priesthood forbids."³⁾

Not only is the doctrine of the Reformed on Christ's high priesthood in harmony with the teachings of Hebrews, it has reflected as no other system of theology has done, the specifically *theological standpoint* of the author of Hebrews. According to the latter the entire process of redemption from beginning to end proceeds from God. The covenant in its origin comes from God (8 : 10—13). He it is Who prescribes the conditions of that covenant, and man has but to obey. He appoints the one who is to be its high priest (5 : 4—6). By His grace Christ has been permitted to taste death for every man (2 : 9). What made Christ the efficient High Priest was the fact that He was of the Melchizedekian order. Of this order the distinctive attribute was its eternity, which attribute Christ is said to have by virtue of His deity (7 : 3). It was the Son

1) Cf. chapter VIII.

2) Cf. chapter VIII.

3) T. C. Edwards : The Epistle to the Hebrews (tenth ed.) p. 136.

of God that came to work out our redemption, as Hebrews tells us in 10 : 5—10. That which gave to our Lord's offering its eternal validity was the eternal spirit, which characterized Him as the divine Son of God (9 : 14). His attribute of eternity makes it possible for Him as One Who ever liveth, to save to the uttermost (7 : 25). And the ultimate end to which man by redemption is brought is full union with God. In that one fact man's salvation, centrally conceived, is said to consist (4 : 16 ; 7 : 19 ; 8 : 10 ; 10 : 22). Throughout the entire epistle the absolute supremacy of God is clearly set forth. It is the unquestionable doctrine of Hebrews that from God, by God, and unto God are all things. It is this theological standpoint which also characterises, more than any other, the Reformed system of theology. It is therefore that the doctrine of election, in which doctrine the absolute sovereignty of God is recognized, is sternly adhered to in this system. The sovereignty of God and the doctrine of election are correlatives. The one cannot be neglected, without the other necessarily suffering.¹⁾

Notwithstanding the substantial agreement of the Reformed doctrine with the teachings of Hebrews, there is one striking difference. It is the relative importance that is attached to the work of the High Priest in heaven. Hebrews attaches very great importance to the high priestly work on earth,²⁾ but as well to the high priestly work in heaven. In the Reformed system, and as well in the Lutheran, the importance of this latter work is recognized and — largely neglected. There must be a reason for this. Perhaps it is the following : The application of Christ's redemptive work in sanctification was always ascribed to the Holy Spirit. But the relation which that Spirit since the ascension sustains to the heavenly High Priest, was not always kept sufficiently in mind. Had the fact received due consideration, that the Holy Spirit is now sent into the church as the Spirit *of the Son*, being so closely related to Him as to enable Paul to say : "The Lord is that Spirit" (II Cor. 3 : 17), then the truth, that the application

1) See further the remarks of Dr. Vos at the close of the article on Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke Pr. Th. Rev. Jan. 1916 p. I ff.

2) Ch. chapter VIII.

of the work of redemption in sanctification is the direct work of the heavenly High Priest through His Spirit, would have accordingly been placed in the foreground, and the need for the Christian to go constantly to the High Priest in heaven for aid would have received a corresponding emphasis. A second reason perhaps is that in the Reformed and Lutheran systems stress was always laid on the doctrine of redemption from sins by the vicarious satisfaction to God's justice rendered in the death of Christ. This doctrine therefore occupied a very central position in these systems of theology. With Paul they determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. 2 : 2). If now in the system of theology undue emphasis were laid upon what Christ did and does as High Priest in the heavenly tabernacle — think of the Socinians —, there would be the great danger that a process of festering would result, which could only be detrimental to the system as a whole. The fear of such results may have withheld them from placing more emphasis than they did on the work of Christ in heaven. Undue emphasis, however, is something very different from not enough. There is no danger for the Reformed system in emphasizing far more than has been done, the high priesthood of our Lord *in heaven*, if only it be kept in mind that the work of our High Priest in heaven is the rendering effective of His representative high priestly obedience and of His sacrifice on earth.

And if the eye of faith be directed to our High Priest *in heaven*, we shall be doing nothing else than what Jesus and the apostles have taught us to do.¹⁾ It is the glorified Lord Who sums up in Himself the benefits of His work on earth, to Whom Jesus and the apostles exhort us to look. (Cf. John 14 : 2, 28 ; Philip. 3 : 20 ; Colos. 3 : 1 ; Hebrews 4 : 15 ; 7 : 25 ; 9 : 28 ; 10 : 21 ; 1 John 2 : 1 Rev. 1 : 18.) It is indeed a superficial theory that would represent the truth thus : "The debt has been paid, the debtor discharged, and the transaction ended."²⁾ It overlooks entirely the present work of our High Priest in heaven, which is as much necessary

1) Cf. e.g. Bavinck : *Geref. Dogmatiek* 1910 III p. 538.

2) T. C. Edwards : *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 134.

to our salvation as the work on earth. The debt indeed has been paid. For this very reason it is faulty to look continually to the cross of Calvary, as if the churches redemption from sin's condemning power were yet to happen. Once for all that has happened twenty centuries ago through the offering of the body of Christ (10 : 10). It is true, our Lord teaches us still to, pray : "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6 : 12). This petition, however, does not relate to atonement of sins still to be made, but to the application to the life of the individual believer of what has long since been objectively secured. And for this application of the forgiveness of sins, as well as for the ethical blessings of salvation, we must go, not to the cross, where the High Priest no longer is, but to the interceding High Priest at the right hand of the Father.

It is of the utmost importance for the growth of spiritual life, that the intercession become a living element of faith, and the Christian consciousness become imbued with the feeling that, if it is to have the various blessings of salvation, it must go to the living Lord above. A dead Saviour cannot help us. It is the Saviour that was dead, but Who, behold, is alive forevermore, that alone can supply our need. The living Lord is the Vine of which we are the branches. If then we want the sap of spiritual life, we must go to Him above. (Colos. 3 : 1). Salvation comes through the mediation of the interceding High Priest (7 : 25). If then we want salvation, to the interceding High Priest we must go. The remark of Dr. A. Kuyper¹⁾ is to the point, that where the intercession of Christ is not reckoned with, spiritual life does not flourish, but becomes impoverished. He remarks further that the true means of strengthening our spiritual life is often neglected, and men take to other devices, which cannot yield the desired result, such as the help of other men etc. He then concludes : "The only means, whereby peace and communion with God return, is, when each evening and morning, day and night, the priestly activity of Christ in the Holiest is as real to the Christian, as the bread and drink upon

1) Dictaten Dogmatiek : Loc. De Christo (Pars Tertia) p. 144.

his table ; when he each moment enjoys that living communion with Christ, and casting aside all work of self, is lifted up as a child by its mother and carried before the presence of the Father above."

The next fact here to be pointed out is the underlying reason for the diversity of opinion which exists regarding the nature of the offering of Christ. Difference of opinion on this subject depends largely upon this question ! What is our idea of God ? For the conception we have of God moulds our opinion of the nature of Christ's atoning sacrifice. If we regard justice as an essential attribute of God's nature, so that God, because of the inner nature of His Being is constrained to reward every man according to his works, then sin must make man liable to punishment, and the offering, whereby alone we can be reinstated to favor with God and can enjoy blessings from God, will be of the nature of penal substitution. If on the other hand justice is not a part of God's nature, then it depends upon the arbitrary will of God whether He wishes to forgive sins ,no satisfaction to justice will be necessary, and the value of our Lord's sacrifice must be sought in something else, as, for example, in the moral influence it will have upon the minds of men etc. Conversely, if we hold that Christ in His sacrificial death did not suffer the penalty of sin, then as a logical consequence our opinion of the nature of God must undergo a corresponding change.

The Protestant Reformers taught that the righteousness of God, which revealed itself towards the sinner as penal justice, was an essential attribute of His nature. In accordance therewith we notice that to them the offering of Christ consisted in the surrender of His life in death as a vicarious penal substitution for sinful man. To the Socinians justice was not a part of God's nature. It depended upon the arbitrary will of God whether or no He would exercise justice. They taught with the Pelagians and the Universalists that God's righteousness was the form which God's love assumed towards the transgressor, when seeking to make him morally better. The death of Christ, accordingly, to the Socinians, and to the Rationalists and "modern" theologians after them, was not an offering rendering satisfaction to God's justice,

but the inevitable result of the fidelity of Jesus to His calling. The Remonstrants also taught that righteousness was not to be deduced from the nature, but from the will of God. Not the righteousness but the equity of God demanded that there be a certain sacrifice for sin. The offering of Christ, though not equivalent to what man would have had to bring, was of so great influence with God, that He was moved by it to forgive out of free grace whosoever led a life of faith. The adherents of the moral theory of atonement, and also of the mystical theory, insofar as they are explicit on the subject, claim that righteousness is not an attribute of God's nature, sin is not guilt, and punishment no restoration of God's justice. Objective atonement by the offering of Christ is here changed to subjective reconciliation. The importance of the death of Christ according to these theories is to be found in the change — moral or mystic — which it produces in the life of man, not in the fulfillment of a demand of God's law. Thus we might go on to show how in the various theories of atonement, the view held with regard to the communicable attributes of God, particularly His righteousness, correspondingly influences the theory held as to the merits of Christ's offering. The one varies with the other.¹⁾ Unity of thought on the subject of the offering of Christ cannot come before there be unity as to the conception of God.

Finally I want to point to the bearing which the teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews, as explained above, has on the doctrine of the mass as taught by the church of Rome and on the doctrine of the eucharist as taught by high church men in the church of England.²⁾ The Roman doctrine of the mass in its older form teaches that it is continuous with the atoning sacrifice of Golgotha and that it is of a propitiatory nature. A more modern form holds that it is continuous with the offering of Christ *in heaven*. Likewise by several high church men in the church of England and by W. Milligan, the eucharist is an offering which represents or also

1) See further on this subject Bavinck : Geref. Dogmatiek 1910 II pp. 95, 107 296, 297 III 407 ff. 411—415, 420, 421, 436—438, 447.

2) Cf. on these views the introductory chapter.

is an organic part of the ceaseless offering of the Head of the church in heaven. Christ is in heaven thought of as continually offering His life to God. In the eucharist, it is said, the church reproduces the offering of Christ her Head in heaven. Hebrews has been appealed to for proof of this position. But as has been pointed out above ¹⁾ Hebrews is in direct conflict with these theories. The offering of Christ, both as regards the part of it which took place on earth, as the part, which took place in heaven, cannot be repeated or be continuous. It was performed once for all, and was finished when Christ sat down at the right hand of Majesty.²⁾ Hebrews supplies superabundant evidence that the offering was not either repeated or continuous. And if the propitiatory offering of Christ was once for all, and has ceased to be brought, the clergy who officiate at the eucharist or mass can in no sense be called a sacrificing priesthood. Hebrews knows of no other priest or high priest in the new covenant than one (4 : 14, 10 : 21). Hebrews does not even call the believers priests. In 13 : 15 which passage might be supposed to imply the priesthood of believers, such a thought is in all probability not intended. Rather, just as the people of the old covenant through the priesthood offered up their sacrifices to God, although they themselves could not be denoted as priests, so also the people of the new covenant are here exhorted to offer their sacrifices of praise through Him Who exercises the corresponding function in the New Testament covenant. It seems precarious, therefore, whereas Hebrews knows of only One Who in the new covenant exercises the function of the priesthood, to claim for the clergy on the basis of what Hebrews teaches, the position of priest in a sense not applicable to the laity, and to ascribe to them the authority to officiate at what is part of the atonement offering of Christ. To make of the clergy a priesthood officiating for the laity means to fall back into Old Testament conditions, which have been annulled by the advent of the New Testament High Priest.

1) Cf. chapter XI.

2) Cf. chapter XI.

XV.

THE PROCESS OF REDEMPTION AS REPRESENTED BY HEBREWS.

In this closing chapter I want to sketch the process of redemption as given in the Epistle to the Hebrews. From the teaching of Hebrews studied in the foregoing chapters, we learn that the process of redemption as viewed by the writer of the Hebrews, is substantially as follows. Man is born a priest. He is born for union with God. His whole life, according to the purposes of the Creator, must bear a priestly character; it must be yielded in loving devotion to God. The duties of this original priesthood of man as created, he in the state of rectitude did faithfully perform. No priest as mediator was needed to intercede between man and God. The union of man with God was so close as to make a priest for man an unnecessary thing.

It is true, nowhere does Hebrews designate the original unfallen man as a priest. A priest is to Hebrews everywhere a strictly soteriological figure. "Every high priest" (in whom the priesthood as a whole is summed up) "is ordained", as 5 : 1, 8 : 3 tell us, "to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin". (cf. 10 : 11). According to Hebrews the existence of priests is due wholly to sin. Had there been no sin, there would then not have been, according to Hebrews, any priests or high priests. The reason why Hebrews thus defines the priesthood, is because he was bound in his presentation of the truth to conditions as they were under the Old Testament. The people of God under the old covenant (in their religious aspect) were divided into two classes: the priests and the laity. When defining what a priest is, Hebrews has in mind the priest *so called*

during the first covenant. Hence his definition of a priest as a soteriological figure laboring for others. This fact nevertheless does not imply that Hebrews would deny the reality of what has in the foregoing paragraph been termed the original priesthood of man. It only means that Hebrews would not call the original man a priest. But that the priesthood of man, if defined not as Hebrews does, but as consisting in loving devotion to God, is not denied by Hebrews, is fully clear from various passages. The very fact that (5 : 1, 8 : 3) a high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, directly implies that the priest must do what man in a sinless condition was himself called upon to do. The thought of loving devotion which man must bring to God as an offering meets us in 13 : 15, where the author exhorts his readers to bring the sacrifice of praise continually to God. Howbeit, as the conditions resulting from sin require, we must now bring this sacrifice through the one High Priest Jesus.

Not only is man born a priest, he was likewise destined at creation to be king under God over the inhabited earth. He was placed by the Creator over the works of His hands. He was crowned with honor and glory. He was made a little lower than the angels. All things were put in subjection under his feet (cf. 2 : 6—8). Man was therefore at creation destined to be ruler over the world, and endowed with powers whereby he could exercise this rulership.

Neither as priest, nor as king, however, did man fulfill his destiny. Or perhaps it would be more proper to say, he never reached his destiny in the fullest sense. Man was to enjoy *abiding* communion with God as priest, and as king he was destined to be *forever* the ruler of the inhabited earth. Had man remained loyal to his God he would have been confirmed in his original state, so that the glories of his original destining would have been forever secure. But sin is the cause that man has missed his true end. "Born for God, he had no right of access to God" (cf. 9 : 8).¹⁾ The original union with God is disrupted. Man can no longer bring his gifts to God. And born to be king, he possesses not the

1) Cf. Wescott Hebrews p. 61.

promised rulership over the earth. "We see not yet all things put under him" 2 : 8. Instead of ruler, he has become a slave, in bondage to sin.

Sin, however, in no way thwarted the original plans of the Creator. It did not make an end to man's existing obligations. Of man was still required a perfect obedience. Loving service was still demanded, as the establishment of the priesthood to perform this duty for man indicates. Nor did God revoke His blessed promises because of sin. He renewed them and raised them to a higher form. The union with God was still a boon held out to man. If this were not so, the priesthood of Christ could never have made it possible to draw nigh to God. And the promise of kingship was also repeated in a modified form. Was man originally destined to be ruler over the *inhabited* earth,¹⁾ he now has the promise of becoming ruler over the *world to come* (2 : 5). The beginning of the realization of this promise we see in the exaltation of the ideal Son of man, Jesus, Who is "crowned with honor and glory". In the crowning of Jesus we have the earnest of the future crowning of man of the fact that he will one day attain to his kingly destiny (2 : 8, 9).

Not only has God retained His original promises as well as His demands and raised them to a higher form, He also made provision for man through another avenue to reach his original goal. God provided the covenant of grace to make it possible under condition obtaining as a result of sin, to arrive at the position of priest and king for which God had created man. As at creation, so in the covenant of grace *obedience* was the condition set for union with God (8 : 9—12) and the inheritance of salvation (5 : 8, 9, 6 : 11—20, 9 : 15).

Of the covenant of grace in the form it assumed at the advent of Christ, its High Priest, we have a prefiguration in the old covenant. The law had the shadow the *σκιὰ* of the good things to come, not the image, the *εἰκὼν*. The image or model was to be found in the heavenly world. There we have the *ἀληθινή*, the veritable

1) Cf. the quotation from Psalm 2 in Hebrews 2 : 6—8.

tabernacle, of which the one on earth was the ἀντίτυπος, the antitype. (9 : 24). Heaven is to Hebrews the home of realities. During the Old Testament period the heavenly world cast its shadow, down upon earth (10 : 1). In the New Testament time the εἰκὼν or heavenly reality came down in a body and has filled the new covenant (12 : 22—24). The old covenant was a parable in advance, of the new (9 : 9). The old covenant does not form an essential element in the process of redemption in the sense that it was the only existent form of the covenant of grace till the new covenant should come into being. The order of things which Christ established on earth existed also throughout the whole Old Testament period, with this difference, that it was then as yet bound up in heaven, the region of realities (8 : 5, 9 : 24), while by Christ these heavenly realities were brought to this earth (10 : 1). The old covenant with its ceremonials, its priests, its sacrifices, was nothing more than a shadow and figure (8 : 5, 9 : 23, 10 : 1), and as such could not form an essential element in the process of redemption. It was a prefiguration of what was to be established by Christ. It being nothing more than a shadow, the sacrifices of the old covenant could not make the worshipper perfect (10 : 1). We in our Reformed dogmatics, following Paul, represent the Old Testament sacrifices as indeed having power to cleanse from sin, through the value they as types derived from the one efficient sacrifice for sin brought by the High Priest Jesus Christ. Hebrews, however, never regards the Old Testament offerings in that light.

The office of High Priest of the covenant of grace given to Christ was not a necessary result of Christ's divine Sonship. If in the divine Sonship as such the office of High Priest were implied, then also in the sinless world Christ would have become High Priest. But this involves the objectionable element that the incarnation would have taken place even if sin had not entered the world. For a high priest, to represent men, must be taken from among men (5 : 1). The Son could be Mediator between God and the created world without being man (1 : 2), but not High Priest. We might suppose that in the fact that the Son was made Heir of all things (1 : 2). His right to the high priesthood was implied. But this

again would involve the necessity of humanity in the Son apart from sin. The Son could become Heir of the sinless world without becoming man, but to be High Priest even of a sinless world Christ would have had to be man.¹⁾ The author deduces the right of Christ to the office of High Priest from a special divine appointment (cf. 5 : 5). The proof of the divine appointment Hebrews finds in the quotations from Psalm II and 110, although this divine appointment itself, as we know from other scripture passages, was made in the eternal council of peace.

The high priesthood is not to Hebrews a natural outflow of our Lord's Sonship. But the *congruity* of the Son's becoming High Priest is in several places pointed out. The absolute necessity for mankind of an eternal, perfect, absolutely free High Priest made imperative that the divine Son assume that office, if mankind was to be saved. He alone had the power of an indissoluble life (7 : 16). No one else had the eternity attribute that would enable him forever to intercede (7 : 25). No temporal being could give the necessary eternal validity to his sacrifice (9 : 14). None but the eternal Son could yield the absolute obedience which gave His sacrifice the necessary ethical worth before God (10 : 10). And none but the Son was free from sinful infirmities and could be perfected forevermore (7 : 28). The greatness of this High Priest lies just in the fact that He is Jesus the Son of God (4 : 14). Eternity, the distinctive attribute of the Melchizedek order, which makes that order the effective one, Christ has by virtue of His divine Sonship (7 : 14, 15 cf. 7 : 3). The summing up in a single sentence in 1 : 2, 3 of the relations, which the one Person of the divine Son sustained to the created world : "Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things", "by Whom He also made the worlds" etc. and the relation He sustains to the redemptive world : "When He had by Himself purged our sins" etc. seems to warrant the statement that the divine Son was to Hebrews the natural Person to receive the appointment to the high priesthood.

The conditions of priesthood and kingship as renewed in the

1) Cf. Chapter IV.

covenant of grace, have been fulfilled by the High Priest, the Surety of the covenant of grace (7 : 22). He is the perfect Author of Salvation, Who has brought man to union with God and rulership (2 : 9, 10, 7 : 19, 20). As High Priest, as the One ordained for men in things pertaining to God, in order to realize the promises of the covenant, Christ had to do two things : He had to restore the broken union and establish right relations of man with God, by making the required reparation for man's sins. And, secondly : He had to do what man had failed to do, render to God the perfect obedience in loving service, which God had set as the condition for the inheritance of His promises. The first duty Christ fulfilled by His sacrifice. By it He restored the right covenant relations and wiped out the debt of sin.¹⁾ The second duty Christ accomplished through His official representative obedience in His probation period on earth (cf. 5 : 8—10, 7 : 26—28).²⁾ Just as according to Reformed dogmatics to Adam was given a time of probation, at the end of which he would have been confirmed in his state of non posse peccare et mori, so Christ, according to Hebrews, on earth underwent a period of probation, His τελείωσις, at the end of which, having rendered a steadfast obedience, He became "perfected".³⁾ And being made perfect, He established by His official obedience, His right to salvation for His people, upon the basis of the gracious covenant promises of God, and thus became Author of eternal salvation (2 : 10, 5 : 8—9). The blessings of abiding union with God and rulership over the world to come, had then become this High Priest's rightful possession.

The duty devolving upon Christ as High Priest of the covenant of grace : to make purification of sins and to restore right covenant relations with God, He fulfilled, as the chapter on the theory of Atonement in Hebrews has sought to prove, by giving Himself as a penal substitution for sinful man. He, by undergoing the punishment of sin in the surrender of His life in death, made restitution to God's violated law. Purification of sins and right

1) Cf. chapter X.

2) Cf. chapter XII.

3) Cf. chapter V.

covenant relations was thereby obtained. And in His τελείωσις, viewed from its positive side, namely, the rendering of a perfect obedience in His official capacity as high priestly Representative of His covenant people, He secured the ethical blessings of salvation ; union with God and rulership over the world to come (2 : 10, 5 : 8, 9, 7 : 28). Thus our Lord procured our salvation by satisfying, both in His representative obedience and in His sacrifice, the demands of God's justice. This fact does not make it impossible that the high priestly work of Christ is at the same time an expression of God's love. For the fact that Jesus *was allowed* to officiate as High Priest, and that He *was appointed* to that office, is not represented as a matter of justice, but of grace. "That He *by the grace of God*" we read in 2 : 9, "should taste death for every man". The primal cause setting the process of redemption in motion is to Hebrews the gracious love of God for His creation. Love here shines through righteousness.

Our Lord, by His earthly career-obedience and sacrifice-therefore, fulfilled the conditions of the covenant of grace and thereby earned His right to perpetual union with God and rulership over the world to come for His covenant people. The arrival of man at his original destiny, insofar as the fulfillment of the conditions as they were renewed in the covenant of grace was concerned, was then guaranteed. Accordingly by His career on earth our Lord *established His claim* to what the high priesthood stood for ; namely, to secure the object of the covenant of grace, or otherwise stated, to secure man's original destiny under conditions obtaining as a result of sin. By His work on earth, He gave proof that He was a perfect High Priest. As a result, when His earthly life was at an end and He entered heaven, He was "called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" ; i. e. He was acknowledged by God to be a Melchizedekian or perfect High Priest (5 : 10, 6 : 20). Not as if He were not High Priest before His entrance to heaven. But just as in Romans 1 : 4 our Lord Who was Son of God from eternity, was declared to be, gave positive evidence that He was the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (cf. Warfield : The Lord of Glory) so also here He, Who was

already High Priest on earth, yea, from the eternal Council of Peace, could be acknowledged by God as a perfect Melchizedekian Priest, after He had proved Himself to be such by His high priestly labors on earth.

When our Lord had crossed the threshold of heaven He began the work of application of what He as High Priest had merited on earth. Did the sacrifice on earth secure for Him the right to approach God's throne in the capacity of man's High Priest (9 : 12), He now appears in the presence of God for us (9 : 24). Had he by His sacrifice on Golgotha blotted out sins, the bar to covenant union with God, He now approached the throne of Majesty and by the part of His offering which took place in heaven, made application of the atonement sacrifice and thus effectually united man again with God (1 : 3, 9 : 12, 23, 25). Did He by His sacrificial death earn the right to officiate as High Priest before God's throne (9 : 12, 10 : 20) and by His official obedience earn for His people the right to the blessings of the covenant promises—the destined glory of His people as priests to God and as kings —, He now in His intercession can with authority and effectually plead for these blessings. And in His benediction He guides His people amidst the dangers of their pathway heavenward, to the destined end of priesthood and kingship, to sonship and glory (2 : 10, 10 : 19—22).

The goal to which Christ in His heavenly intercession is leading His people is not in all respects identical with the original destiny of man.¹⁾ Strictly speaking not the promises of God as given at creation, but as renewed in the covenant of grace, are realized by Christ. Salvation, therefore, throughout eternity will have as its eternal foundation the covenant promises and their fulfillment by Christ. Hence the author can call the covenant an *eternal* covenant, can speak of its High Priest, the incarnate and glorified Lord, as an *eternal* High Priest, and can name the redemption He wrought an *eternal* redemption. Also in eternity salvation will rest in this covenant of grace and the fulfillment of its conditions by Christ. Our priesthood and kingship will rest forever upon the redemptive

1) Cf. Vos : Hebrews. the Epistle of the Diatheke, in Pr. Th. Rev. 1916 p. 29.

work of this High Priest-King. In the person of the Godman, the Surety of this better covenant, salvation will be forever grounded. It might seem as though when the last of the people of the covenant will have been brought to full union with God, there will be no work for Christ as Melchizedekian High Priest to perform. However, salvation is by Hebrews not conceived of as an objective entity, but as consisting in full union with the blessed God (2 : 10, 7 : 25, 10 : 19, 20). The right to draw near to God will also in eternity rest in the Melchizedekian High Priest, and can only be through the mediation of Him. Were in eternity the last traces of sin to be wiped away, then also the humanity of Christ — a necessary element of the Melchizedekian High Priest — would one day have an end. And with it our humanity and our salvation would cease. Salvation throughout all eternity will retain its redemptive nature and Christ will forever remain a soteriological High Priest. God will again be all in all, because in the covenant of grace the purposes of creation were not annulled, but realized under conditions obtaining as a result of sin and in fact raised to a higher form. But, nevertheless, never will the covenant of grace cease, never its High Priest, Who is God and Man, cease from His high priestly functions. "Over the entire eternal world, so far as the author's vision extends redemption spreads its wings not as a dark shadow, but as a glorious consciousness capable of being perpetuated, because from it the pain of sin is forever removed by the superabundant expiation. The saints above breathe forever the atmosphere of grace."¹⁾

1) Vos : Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke, in Pr. Th. Rev. 1916 p. 29.

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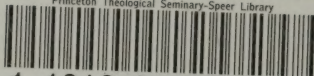
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